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William II, 1859-1941.

Letters from the Kaiser to the Czar

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LETTERS FROM THE KAISER TO THE CZAR

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KAISER AND CZAR ABOARD THE "HOHENZOLLERN"

The weak Czar was often tricked by the Kaiser when accepting his hospitality, and many matters of state were settled (to the Kaiser's advantage) aboard the Kaiser's yacht.

LETTERS FROM THE KAISER TO THE CZAR

COPIED FROM GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES IN PETROGRAD
UNPUBLISHED BEFORE 1920

PRIVATE LETTERS FROM THE KAISER TO THE CZAR FOUND IN A CHEST AFTER THE CZAR'S EXECUTION AND NOW IN POSSESSION OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

COPIED AND BROUGHT FROM RUSSIA

BY

ISAAC DON LEVINE

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INTRODUCTION

Upon the execution of Nicholas Romanoff, the former Czar of Russia, and his wife and children in Ekaterinburg in July, 1918, a case containing his private correspondence was found among his personal effects. Among its contents was a batch of seventy-three letters from Kaiser Wilhelm to the Czar and a much more voluminous batch of letters from the Czarina to the Czar. The letters were transmitted by the local Ekaterinburg authorities to the central government in Moscow, where they are kept in the state archives.

There have been so many absurd stories in circulation in Europe in connection with the Kaiser-Czar letters that the circumstances of their publication in Europe and America should be made clear here. In Great Britain Winston Churchill eulogized *The Morning Post* for obtaining the letters, although that journal had nothing to do with the bringing of the letters out of Russia. The London *Naval and Military Record* commented editorially on the same subject as follows: "It has been left to the enterprise of British journalism to publish the last and by far the most damaging exposure of Germany's ex-Kaiser." In Paris a prominent

newspaper, describing how I obtained the letters, declared that I was enabled to do so through my influence with Lenin. In Amsterdam a newspaper printed a despatch from its Berlin correspondent announcing that the letters had once been published in 1917 in a Petrograd monthly periodical.

Now the facts are quite different from the foregoing allegations, which circulated in the European press for weeks. It was not the enterprise of British but of American journalism which gave the world the Kaiser's and Czarina's letters to the Czar. In April, 1919, the writer left the United States to go to Soviet Russia in the capacity of correspondent for *The Chicago Daily News,* and made two trips there from Scandinavia, one in May and the other in September, 1919.

During my second visit to Soviet Russia I was enabled to gain access to the archives of the government where I discovered, among other things, the Kaiser's letters to the Czar, and immediately realized their enormous historical value. The original letters are of course the property of the Russian state and there was no question of obtaining them. The task consisted of receiving the permission of the proper authorities to take copies of the letters. I did not need Lenin's influence for this. As a matter of fact, I never even met Lenin while in Soviet Russia.

I carried out with me only one copy from the original letters of the Kaiser to the Czar. This

copy is in my possession and is the one reproduced in this volume. The copies of the letters used by *The Morning Post* in London, the *Vossische Zeitung* in Berlin, the *Journal* in Paris and the other European publishers were made from the copy in my possession. Being second and third copies, they were not free from errors. The present edition is therefore the only absolutely authoritative one and must be treated as the original edition by students of international affairs.

The letters from the Kaiser to the Czar were written in English, the language of the Russian and German courts, and were usually addressed to "Nicky" and signed "Willy." None of these letters, covering a period of twenty years, 1894-1914, has ever been published before 1920. The correspondence between the Kaiser and the Czar, which was published in a Russian periodical in 1917 and reprinted in a New York newspaper several months later, consisted of a number of telegrams exchanged between Willy and Nicky in the years 1904-1907. It appeared as "The Willy-Nicky Correspondence," and the Amsterdam newspaper previously referred to confused it with the letters here presented.

Without questioning the genuineness of the Willy-Nicky telegrams, it should nevertheless be emphasized that it is scarcely possible that no errors should have been committed in the transmission of a large number of telegrams. In the case of the letters contained in this volume we have really a set of irrefu-

table and unquestionable documents. The Kaiser himself confirmed their genuineness, although criticizing their publication. In a letter written in January, 1920, from Amerongen, Holland, to Prince Fürstenberg, and reprinted in *The London Times,* on January 28th, the Kaiser wrote regarding these letters:

"What do you think about the unlawful publication of the correspondence with Nicholas? These people have not the least sympathy in them, and I shall be glad if everything is published without alterations. I have given orders to Loewenfeldt to protest against the publication of these private letters, but as this is being done in hostile countries he will have less success than in the case of Bismarck. After the treatment I have received and still receive from the German people I am not surprised that the German newspapers participate in these dirty practices."

The Kaiser's letters are of course published without alterations. There was never any intention to do otherwise. Not a word in them is omitted. Although the Kaiser's English is far from perfect, it is left unchanged here. The only change made in this edition is the substitution of the word "and" for the character "&" which abounds in the original letters.

The numerous errors in spelling are retained. The most confusing of these errors is "were" in place of "where." Once the Kaiser has "keys" in-

stead of "quays," and "boyes" for "buoys." The other mistakes are understandable. "Beeing" for "being," "wether" for "whether," "takle" for "tackle," are common misspellings. Even more common are "allready," "allways," "wellfare," "openess," "assisstance." The Kaiser writes "courtesey," "existant" and "thruthfulness." Instead of "Turkey" he writes "Turky," and instead of "Dardanelles" he spells "Dardanels." His letters are replete with faulty constructions and contain many misspellings in addition to those here mentioned.

In reply to the Kaiser's complaint about the publication of his private letters, Maximilian Harden, the noted German publicist, wrote: "The ex-Kaiser stigmatizes as a 'dirty' violation of propriety the publication of his letters to the Czar Nicholas and other monarchs, whereas he considered it to be his right and his duty to purloin documents in Belgium, to falsify them, and to circulate them all over the globe. This, however, is not surprising when the German people, who endured an adept in theatricalism for thirty years, are treated as if they were evil-minded, undutiful children."

The comment on the letters all over the world has been as voluminous as it has been many-sided. However, three main viewpoints can be discerned in the very numerous reviews of the Kaiser's correspondence. First, the opinion of the Kaiser held by *The Morning Post,* Great Britain's leading Tory

organ. Second, the comment of *The Manchester Guardian,* the great Liberal journal. Third, the average German view of Wilhelm as expressed by Professor Walter Goetz.

To *The Morning Post* the letters reveal the Kaiser as an arch-plotter. Its comment has been expressed in a series of comprehensive and virile editorials bearing such titles as "the arch-conspirator," the "honest Iago," and "Nemesis." Selections from some of the leading articles of *The Morning Post* * are given below:

The publication of the letters of the GERMAN EMPEROR to the EMPEROR of ALL the RUSSIAS has naturally awakened a profound interest both in this country and abroad, in fact throughout the civilised world. Never before, perhaps, has there been made known in the lifetime of the author so complete and so voluminous an exposition of the vast and unscrupulous intrigues and the grandiose ambitions of the powerful and autocratic monarch of a great military nation. Thus the Imperial letters make an historical document of the highest value, providing the key to the complex and hidden machinery of European international policies during the ten years preceding the Great War, which was their inevitable and disastrous consummation. In as far as the GERMAN EMPEROR himself is concerned, there is little scope for conjecture, inasmuch as he condemns himself with his own hand. History as a general rule is largely a matter of

* *Note.*—Many of the notes following the letters in this volume have been culled from the columns of *The London Morning Post.*

piecing together available evidence and filling in the gaps with ingenious and learned hypotheses. The discovery of new evidence not infrequently invalidates the historian's reconstruction, as in the notable instance of the records of the French Revolution, lately so admirably rewritten by M. Lenôtre. But in the case of the letters of William Hohenzollern the documents are complete. The records of the conversation at one end of the telephone, as it were, are precise, and although the written evidence of the replies is not available their nature may be divined with a general accuracy by the student of the affairs of the time. Light is concentrated upon the central figure of the long drama which merged into tragedy at last, and in the shadow beyond may be discerned other Kings and Emperors, their Ministers and Chancelleries, and beyond these again swarming factories founding cannon, and busy dockyards building ships of war, and the hosts of armed men. That single figure so uncontrollably active in the lighted circle, swiftly writing, issuing commands with passionate gesture, continually agitates the dimmer groups beyond, and the tremor speeds across seas and continents until Peking is perturbed, there is a stir in Tokyo, and even the massive tranquillity of Washington is momentarily ruffled. For if there is one aspect which more than another saliently emerges from these letters, it is that the German Emperor was wholly possessed by one master idea, and that idea was war. Sleeping or waking, war colored the very texture of his mind.

Partly as cause and partly as effect, the German Emperor's fixed idea of war was inseparably connected with his dynastic ambitions. Step by step these are revealed in his letters, and shape themselves into the gigantic plan of a vast confederation of States of which Germany should be

the head. Thence she could dominate the world. It is the old, fatal dream of world-conquest; the vision of SENNACHERIB, of ALEXANDER, of CÆSAR, of NAPOLEON. The GERMAN EMPEROR has been called a mediævalist; but in truth his aspirations derive from thousands of years before the Christian era; and when he stood for days rapt in contemplation of the disinterment of ancient inscriptions from the sun-baked soil of the Mediterranean island it is odds but he was thinking of the half-mythical conquerors of vanished civilisations as his progenitors. Like them, the German War Lord was confronted with one formidable obstacle towering in his path. Russia he might weaken and cajole; France he thought to subdue; Austria-Hungary was obedient; Italy might be persuaded; and as for the smaller nations, his foot would be on their necks. But what of the British Empire? Supreme on all seas, owning one-fifth of the habitable globe, peaceable until attacked, but when attacked indomitably stubborn, the English would never consent to an European hegemony. They might be deceived for a time; but ultimately, it seems, they must be vanquished. Now and again, in the course of the letters, that conviction of the GERMAN EMPEROR is vividly revealed. For, broadly regarded, the GERMAN EMPEROR'S main purpose became the conquest and the subjugation of the British Empire. The astute suggestion made to the Emperor NICHOLAS that he was threatened in the East had its part in bringing about the Russo-Japanese War, which left Russia weakened and humiliated; and therefore, so reasoned the KAISER, the more pliant to his will. He succeeded, indeed, in fastening upon Russia a commercial treaty which ensured German trade predominance, and a diplomatic treaty which was accepted by the RUSSIAN EM-

PEROR, conferring upon Germany political predominance. Up to this point it seems that NICHOLAS was deceived, or partly deceived. But what actually happened was that the GERMAN EMPEROR'S cunning overreached itself. The terms of both treaties were of a nature so monstrous that no nation would ultimately accept them.

By this time, too, the German policy had necessarily aroused alarm throughout Europe, and awakened antagonistic forces. Broadly speaking, the answer to the menace of a hostile European confederation, to which the GERMAN EMPEROR once thought of adding Japan, and, again, the United States, was to divide the elements of the combination and so attain a balance of power. In this connection the world owes very much to the sagacity and diplomatic skill of King EDWARD VII., who was, of course, supported by his Ministers. The Triple Alliance secured by the KAISER was balanced by the Triple Entente; and the GERMAN EMPEROR'S design was for the time being frustrated; a failure he never forgot nor forgave. The Great War was a tremendous attempt to redeem that defeat. How craftily planned, how skilfully manœuvred, was the original design, are revealed in the letters. And here we may note that clever as the GERMAN EMPEROR was, he was not clever enough. Of a swift and a penetrating intellect, possessed of immense ingenuity, the KAISER lacked what alone makes these gifts effective. He lacked judgment. He lacked common sense. Common sense would have told him that world-conquest is no longer practicable. Common sense would have warned him that to extort too much from a neighbor would annul the very purpose of the extortion. And a reasoned judgment would have enabled the KAISER to perceive that even if it were possible to fulfil his dream, the cost

would be so frightful that none could gain by it, that the fulfilment could be no more than the affair of a moment, and that the rest would be war, unending war. As matters stand, after the event, the war has brought no profit even to the victors, but a wide calamity and a profound disease which cannot be healed in this generation. And he who before all others is most guilty, deprived of his glory, stripped of his possessions, discrowned and abject, dwells in a dishonorable exile, the pensioner of a small nation which once he despised. . . .

There can be no doubt that the ex-German Emperor was a great letter writer; the letters which he sent to the Czar prove it conclusively.

It is clear that in this correspondence the Emperor set out to make himself interesting, and it is equally clear that he fully succeeded. Whatever may be the subject on which he is expatiating—the French mentality, the modern newspaper, the British Navy, the way to manage the people, the diplomacy of King Edward, the "Yellow Peril," the famous visit to Jerusalem, and so on—he is always entertaining. He was, of course, tremendously interested in a vast number of subjects and he knew just enough about them never to be grotesque and not enough ever to be dull. And in this correspondence, he was at his very best, for he was playing a great game. Indeed, to break the Franco-Russian Alliance, to make the CZAR an enemy of England, to place Europe under German hegemony was an ambition strong enough to make even a dull man lively and to speed a clumsy and halting pen. It was only when the writer realised the game was up that the letters became shorter and less exuberant. But during those historic days when Great Britain, Russia, and France were drawing together under the im-

pulse of a common danger, the Imperial scribe used every art to cajole, to flatter, to amuse, and to threaten the Emperor Nicholas. Indeed, it is the variety of method employed that is one source of special attraction in these letters. Suddenly, amidst the flatteries, the sage counsels, the tender solicitude, the deep sympathy, the mailed fist appears, and a threat and almost a command are launched forth. Then he changes his tune again. But the aim is always the same, and though it failed—perhaps because it failed—the letters are of extraordinary interest, not only for their "human" side, but because they are the prelude to the great storm which broke on the world in 1914. . . .

These intimate epistles, addressed to the late Emperor of Russia, alone suffice to prove that from first to last the German Emperor, in the prosecution of his vast and sinister designs, was so far from acting as a despot, ignoring the sentiments and predilections of his people, that he never entertained the smallest doubt of their absolute and enthusiastic support. To what extent their allegiance had been secured by that method of "mass-suggestion," of which a good deal has been written, is another question. It is enough to know that the German nation was welded together as a single instrument to accomplish the triumphant destiny of the Great German race. . . .

It was one of the essential elements in the schemes of the German Emperor so to weaken Russia that she should become subservient to the German hegemony; and the readiest means to that end was to embroil Russia with Japan. Thus in these crafty suggestions we trace the origin of the Russo-Japanese War. As the series proceeds the German Emperor's hatred of England and his dislike and jealousy of King Edward VII. become manifest. But in

King EDWARD the GERMAN MONARCH was dealing with an intelligence superior to his own, and a talent for diplomacy to which this country owes much more than has yet been revealed. But if the GERMAN EMPEROR hated England, he held France in a stupid contempt, for which he subsequently paid a devastating price.

Although we have not the replies of the Emperor of RUSSIA to complete the correspondence, the internal evidence of the GERMAN EMPEROR'S letters shows that the CZAR by no means allowed his policy to be dominated by the German guile. When the decisive moment arrived the Emperor of RUSSIA chose the Triple Entente, and the GERMAN EMPEROR'S long and elaborate combinations were completely foiled. . . .

In the course of his letters it will be remarked that his IMPERIAL MAJESTY stooped to the basest devices without a thought. It was perhaps this singular moral obtuseness which ultimately vitiated his diplomacy. He had a blind spot in his mind. At the same time the amiable duplicity of the GERMAN EMPEROR'S correspondence is so admirably done as to become an effect in art; and the letters of WILLIAM HOHENZOLLERN will assuredly rank as a classic in that form of literature. . . .

One of two things invariably occurred to rulers or statesmen who tried to deal with the GERMAN EMPEROR. Either they were compelled, like Austria and the Ottoman Empire, to accept a subordinate, even a servile, position, or, like certain British Ministers, they fell into the snares so carefully designed by the arch-conspirator. The Marquess of SALISBURY, the greatest statesman of his time, entertained no illusions concerning the GERMAN EMPEROR, whose extraordinary instability of character had by 1898 become no-

torious. The inconsistency of the letter of May 30, 1898, must have been evident to the Emperor of RUSSIA, for if tentative offers of alliance were made by Great Britain, they were, on the Imperial writer's own showing, conceived in the interests of peace, and yet in the same letter and in the next the GERMAN EMPEROR plainly insinuates that Great Britain is inspired by some sinister design against the peace of Europe. "We two," writes the GERMAN EMPEROR to the CZAR, "have the same opinions: we want peace, and we have sustained and upheld it till now . . . they (the British) are trying hard, as far as I can make out, to find a Continental army to fight for their interests."

At that time the feeling of France towards England was far from amicable; and that circumstance apparently moved the GERMAN EMPEROR to tell the CZAR that the "newest move" of the British "is the wish to gain France over from you, and they in consequence have suddenly decided to send the DUKE OF CONNAUGHT to the French Army Manœuvres, a nice little plan of COURCELLES, I think, who is ardently at work between Paris and London. I already once warned your people of him!" The intention of these suggestions is to make as much mischief as possible between Russia, France, and England. The RUSSIAN EMPEROR is asked to suspect Great Britain of ulterior purposes inimical to Russia. Nothing that England can do is right; nor is anything more remarkable in the GERMAN EMPEROR'S correspondence than his intense hatred and jealousy of Great Britain. In this alone is he consistent. One of the chief reasons why the Cretan affair, which threatened about this time to embroil all Europe, was so difficult to settle is now revealed. While Germany was ostensibly helping the other Powers to restore order in Crete, where the Turks

were slaying the Christians in their familiar light-hearted way, the GERMAN EMPEROR was secretly inciting the CZAR to side with the Ottoman Empire and to prevent the expulsion of the Turks from the island. Diplomacy, in fact, was at a stand, and we now know why. The difficulty was solved by Rear-Admiral NOEL (afterwards Admiral of the Fleet, Sir GERARD NOEL), who definitely ordered the Turks to leave Crete, who saw to it that his orders were obeyed, and who was afterwards publicly complimented by Lord SALISBURY upon his action.

It is at this period, too, that the GERMAN EMPEROR'S vast dream of Eastern conquest begins to emerge. He desires for the time being to secure the support of Russia, as an Oriental Power, and her recommendation to the Mohammedan world in general. The vision of a Mohammedan Empire inspires his memorable voyage to the Holy Land. . . .

The progress of the correspondence between the EX-EMPEROR and the late CZAR brings us to a very remarkable little drama in which the HOHENZOLLERN reveals in a sudden and baleful flash the treachery of himself and of his race. He had been egging on the CZAR to his disastrous Manchurian adventure. He had described himself and the Emperor NICHOLAS as the two crusaders of Christendom against the Yellow Peril. With the pen and even with the brush he had done his best to rouse the Emperor of RUSSIA to a fanatical fervour, and his letters were full not indeed of explicit pledges but of hints and implications that he might be trusted as a brilliant second, or at least as a benevolent neutral in any such enterprise. Thus urged, and not, we may be certain, only by WILLIAM, but by all the agents of persuasion at the German command, Russia went to war. The Emperor NICHOLAS, as we see from the letter of the

6th of June, 1904, regarded his Correspondent as a "real friend," and this "real friend" overflows with sympathy at the Russian naval losses and military embarrassments. The "real friend" also is ready to help with any information which will widen the quarrel, as, for example, that Japan has supplied China with arms made of French steel, and that France has been induced by a perfidious England not to help her Ally in the field or on the sea: *'Il va sans dire* that if France had been under the obligation of helping you I would, of course, not have budged a finger to harm her, for that would have been most illogical on the part of the author of the Picture 'Yellow Peril.'"

But the time comes when Russia is so deeply engaged that she must either draw troops from her Western frontier or submit to defeat. And then the "real friend" reveals himself. He will guarantee that Western frontier; in plain language, he will not attack Russia when she can no longer defend herself—but at a price, and that price is a Commercial Treaty. Now there are treaties and treaties, but this particular Treaty was, in fact, a Treaty of Exploitation—of such exploitation, indeed, that no country—at least no country not a Free Trade country—would have submitted to it unless under compulsion. Russia was greatly dependent upon the German market for the sale of her corn, and in 1902 Germany had raised the duty on Russian corn from 43 to 78 per cent. WITTE had replied by raising the Russian duty on German manufactures. Germany now demanded that the Russian excess duty on her manufactures should be abolished, but refused to make any concession in the German excess duty on Russian corn. Russia protested, but was forced to grant a practically open market

to German manufactures and preferential railway terms without any reciprocal benefit. . . .

There is naturally some delay in signing such a document, and the Emperor WILLIAM writes—from the Mediterranean—a letter which in one lurid flash reveals that sinister character of which we have spoken. He speaks with ill-concealed irritation of the delay, and adds:

"What a lark it would be if you suddenly were to thump your imperial fist on the 'Table of green cloth,' and give the lazy ones a jump! After all, one cannot wait for ever, considering the many months that have already been wasted. A promise of a nice picnic in Siberia will, I am sure, do wonders." The EMPEROR, in fact, is to threaten his Ministers with Siberia if they do not sign a treaty disastrous to Russia! And the KAISER thinks that the CZAR will be amused by such a proposal! We are left wondering what the CZAR replied to his "real friend," but we may imagine that the reply was tinged with sarcasm.

To the Liberal *Manchester Guardian* the letters show the Kaiser as a contemptible figure, "a mediævalist fanatic on a modern throne." He is characterized as an "anti-Liberal," an "arch-Tory," a most irresponsible person in one of the most responsible offices in the world. The *Guardian* writes:

It is appalling to think that the brain behind them (the letters) was for many years the most self-assertively active in the international affairs of the world, and that a nation with the immense capacity and energy of the Germans should not have shaken itself free of such captaincy before the catastrophe came. . . .

At bottom the KAISER had only one subject—the indefeasible excellence of monarchy by divine right. Whatever else he might mention, the KAISER was always asserting by implication the infallibility of anointed sovereigns. "We Christian Kings and Emperors," he writes, "have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is, to uphold the principle *von Gottes Gnaden* [by the Grace of God]." He evidently believed it. As one reads on through the letters one becomes steadily more and more thankful that in England we dealt with such stuff, once for all, in the seventeenth century. KING CHARLES's head keeps on coming in, all over the manuscript. . . .

These letters from the KAISER to the CZAR suggest obliquely a sinister sketch of the last unhappy autocrat of Russia. For many of the KAISER's letters are such as it was a baseness in the CZAR to receive without sending such a stinging reply as would have stopped the whole ignoble campaign of back-biting and disloyalty. While these letters in which the KAISER bespattered the whole French nation with contemptuous abuse were going—apparently unrebuked, at any rate unprevented—to the CZAR, the CZAR was posing in public as the loyal and chivalrous friend of France. While the CZAR was an honoured guest of the people of France he was accepting at any rate a passive part in a correspondence in which his hosts, and especially their army, were accused of dishonour and lying, corruption and cowardice. We knew already that before the Russian Revolution no military secret of ours or France's was safe at the Russian Court. And now we see why. If these letters were what the CZAR would read from the KAISER during the honeymoon of the Franco-Russian Alliance, there was no bar of honour left to keep "Willy" and "Nicky" from sending and

receiving abuse of France and England during the war.

The luckless CZAR cannot answer now for his passive complicity in this breach of decency. In a sense, we cannot even accuse him of personal failure. Fate set him up for an autocrat, and whatever may have been true in some simpler age of the world, if there ever was any, it is clear now that a man cannot be brought up as an autocrat without such damage to judgment and character as makes him unfit to exercise any determining influence on public affairs. The KAISER'S letters are those of a lost mind—not, apparently, a mind organically deficient, but a mind deprived of all sense of the relative values of things by the lifelong nursing of the illusion that some 78,000,000 men and women are "his," as the deer in a park are his, and that God has made it his, the KAISER'S, job to go up and down the world scheming and bluffing and grabbing and pulling wires and setting other peoples by the ears in order to get "his" people on in the world and show "his" Reichstag how little it can do as compared with a modern FREDERICK THE GREAT or HENRY THE FIFTH. The wires pulled in these letters were seldom very nice. Sometimes they were disreputable with a vengeance. The setting-on of Russia to wear herself out in fighting Japan, for the honour of CHRIST and the confusion of BUDDHA, was pretty bad. But the letters written in the prosecution of that piece of policy are run close by one written a little before Christmas, 1898, from Palestine, in which fervour about Holy Places is oddly jumbled with almost incoherent rage at the failure of France and England to go to war about Fashoda. This passionate cultivation of ill-will between neighbours is the most repulsive ingredient in the diplomatic method of the KAISER. SHAKESPEARE'S Bolingbroke, another typical Old

Diplomatist, gave it as a precept of statecraft to his son to "busy giddy minds in foreign quarrels." The KAISER tried to improve on this by busying foreign minds in giddy quarrels. In these letters he tries to embroil Russia with Japan, with France, and, apropos of Crete in 1898, with England, whom he accuses of an intention to grab Crete or Suda Bay, just as he had accused us of plotting to violate the Dardanelles when we tried, somewhat feebly, to dissuade ABDUL HAMID from murdering Armenians. The Old Diplomacy is seen, again, in its full panoply of cynicism where Mr. CHAMBERLAIN made his famous overture to Germany for an alliance at a time when our relations with France were at their worst and our yellow press was genially proposing to "roll France in mud and blood," contrary to the advice of slow-coaches like ourselves. On getting the offer, the KAISER at once wrote a glowing account of its handsomeness to the CZAR, pointedly indicating that the suggested league would include England, Germany, Austria, Italy, the United States, and Japan, and exclude Russia and France, and then went on: "Now, as my old and trusted friend, I beg you to tell me what you can offer me and will do if I refuse." Simply the auction idea. All the balm on this anointed King did not prompt him to anything nobler than that.

Professor Walter Goetz's comment on the Kaiser's letters may be said to be a fair expression of Germany's view of the Kaiser after the publication of his correspondence with the Czar. This view is that although Wilhelm was an irresponsible person, although his mistakes were numerous, he nevertheless sincerely worked for peace and the

war was not of his making. Upon the publication of the Kaiser's letters in Germany, the Nationalists, the strongest group of monarchists in the country, at their convention in Cologne, adopted a resolution repudiating their former emperor. In part, this resolution read: "The Kaiser's letters give a true picture of his haphazard, irresponsible policy which vacillated constantly. The effect of these letters has been revolting. Although we are still convinced monarchists, we have the right to criticize. Therefore, we announce that the person who was our former Kaiser is no longer representative of our monarchistic principles."

Professor Goetz sees in the Kaiser a poor diplomatist primarily, a man who chased after wild schemes without tending to the vital interests of Germany. The Kaiser is represented as having had good intentions, but as blundering in his efforts to accomplish them. Profesor Goetz's article, in part, follows:

> These letters need not shun the light of publicity. They do, it is true, exhibit all the foibles which detract from the picture that WILHELM II. presents to the observer; still on the other hand they all bear witness to his good intentions and, above everything else, to his honest desire for peace. This positive statement may well be made, before any opponents, filled with prejudice, will exploit them for their purposes.
>
> The letters are written in English, the language which both rulers always used, in conversation as well as in writ-

ing to each other. The CZAR's answers are missing; here and there some traces as to how they ran can be found in the letters of WILHELM II. For us, however, those answers would be secondary in interest, compared with the KAISER's expressions. Hardly any evidence will be needed to establish the fact that WILHELM II. was the personality with far more strength and initiative. As the letters show, the active political aims are on his side. He wants to produce an impression on the CZAR; he wants to cement Russia's policy with that of Germany, in accordance with the needs of the German interests and the peace of Europe. It would surely be desirable to have the CZAR's answers; they would settle beyond any doubt the historical events. Still, at this moment the world is concerned with WILHELM II., with his alleged responsibility for the world war, with his entire personality, and for this purpose the share borne by him in this correspondence will suffice for us. The contents of the letters are ample enough to give us an insight into the KAISER's political realm of thought, although high politics is the very subject about which we are being informed only in a fragmentary way, and some important questions are not discussed. Moreover, in order to form a final judgment, the reader would have to be placed in a position to follow through a similar series of confidential letters the simultaneous relations towards Queen VICTORIA of England and King EDWARD VII.; for however close and unquestionably evident the friendship towards NICHOLAS II. was, and however pointed some expressions he uses about England may sound, still friendship and tactics were undoubtedly closely in touch with each other on all these occasions of political intercourse, and the urgent desire again and again shown by the KAISER for new possi-

bilities of intercourse can be taken only as indicating his apprehension that influences brought by others to bear upon NICHOLAS II. might interfere with the direction that his German friend was attempting to give to matters.

WILHELM II., who overrated himself and his words to such a marked extent, was evidently unable to realize that it was just he, almost more than anybody else, who jarred upon the feelings of others and provoked unpleasant opinions; he believed in his charming amiability, in his persuasive talents and in the deeply rooted right of his convictions. He was not conscious of the want of tact which not infrequently went hand in hand with affability and estranged from him persons of importance. Appearances pointed to it that the meetings with the CZAR were successful—that political results sprung from them; and this is why this expedient was resorted to over and over again. Undoubtedly the CZAR was loyally devoted to the KAISER and inclined to heed the influence of his friend, who was about as much ahead of him in age as in length of reign, and whom he—this is said with hesitation and uncertainty—may have admired for his brilliant qualities.

Such were the natural dispositions and limitations which engendered in WILHELM II. the first great deception in which he was living: namely the belief that a general policy could be built up on the personal relations of the rulers. The very personality of the CZAR would hardly suffice to offer the securities required for such an assumption. For however the descriptions of the CZAR that have so far appeared, may vary in detail, still all critics agree as to the lack of a strong and clearly expressed will on his part. It is true that the CZARINA, with her German inclinations, is likely to have exercised considerable influence over her hus-

band; still the letters published in this book furnish the proof that all brotherly friendship could not divert the Russian policy from its ultimate fatal aims. The KAISER had, so it seems, tried everything to adapt himself to the CZAR'S personality and to retain his confidence. He had shown to him and the Russian naval office secret German ship-building plans, while giving utterance to the thought that the fleets of both countries were to be considered as one great organization; he offered a suggestion that the German Bagdad railway might serve to transport Russian troops in a trice from Odessa to Koweit on the Gulf of Persia, so as to halt the British there; he informed the CZAR at once of the English alliance offered in 1898; yet, after all, neither friendship nor confidence was the decisive factor in high politics.

In the same way as the KAISER was relying on erroneous premises when judging of the formal elements of politics, he was unable to place himself in the midst of the conditions that existed in the world. However modern the KAISER has often appeared to be when handling questions concerning the future of Germany, when showing an interest in technical problems and conferring with economical experts whatever their creed might be, a fundamental contrast still existed between him and the world of today. Devoted as he was to the duties imposed on him by his vocation as a ruler, he could not help viewing that vocation as a divine mission and this led him to a blind overestimation of the princely system and of princely persons, and to an underestimation, no less blind, of other forms of government, and other persons. The letters published in this volume are rich in examples of this disastrous imagination. It was this mistaken idea which, notwithstanding all plainly

visible notes of warning, led to the belief that Germany and Russia had to represent common monarchical interests, in opposition to an inferior world. An understanding of real facts, while found here and there, is yet on the whole lacking to a surprising extent. Roughly speaking, the letters start with the time when Germany entered into world politics. It might be assumed therefore that the occasion existed for discussing and settling the relations of Germany with the great world powers. But the KAISER is hardly ever seen to handle such concrete questions as would adjust contrary views, establish a community of interests and safeguard the course of the policy of Germany. Always the "traditional friendship" between the HOHENZOLLERNS and the CZARS, and next to that also the community of monarchical interests, are the proposed link to connect Russia and Germany. Republican institutions, the parliamentary system, anarchy, nihilism and revolution are pushed forward by the KAISER and presented as possessing a dangerous inner relationship; this perspective is opened before the ally of the French Republic, to frighten him. In the common interest the cry is raised to beware of English intrigues (nor, of course, can there be any doubt that they existed); but in vain will the reader look for political ideas that could have established a Russian-German community of interests on a solid basis. Instead of this, the "Yellow Peril" dominates the KAISER; in the Far East he sees looming a menace to the white race, to western civilization. This thought is reiterated like a monomaniac's idea—the difficulty of German world politics had never in any way entered the mind of the KAISER when he imagined the warding off of "Buddhism, heathenism and barbarism" as common tasks which were to bind together the European powers. Or did he bring for-

ward here views that were to occupy only the Russian mind, and was it his intention to divert Russia with all means towards eastern Asia?

German statesmen surely were pleased to see Russia draw herself back from her old favorite field of trouble-making activity, the Balkans, and map out aims in the east which were likely to occupy her for decades to come. However, it is not Germany who has pointed out to Russia this new field, but the successes of the Japanese in the war against China gave the impulse to Russia to proceed in that direction. Her intention was to secure the eastern sea coast and an influence on China, before Japan could become an annoying competitor. Russian public opinion had for weeks been aroused against Japan, and in favor of having free play in the east, before the KAISER expressed himself to the CZAR in this matter. Russia was the leading power in the common action of Germany, France and Russia against Japan; no instigation from Germany was needed to make Russia discover her interests in eastern Asia and stand up for them with increasing obstinacy. If the KAISER, in language rich with enthusiasm, extolled the CZAR as the author of these new political tendencies, we might well find in this fact a hope for deliverance from the nightmare which Russia had constituted for Europe, as well as a hope for common advantages, as is clearly shown by the wish expressed for a German coaling station in the orient.

German politics, of course, had to take into consideration one more point: to divert Russia from joint action with France against Germany. Surely, the KAISER cannot be blamed in this case for harboring such a wish. In attempting to realize his desire, he chose the means of stirring up the CZAR'S monarchical instinct against the French Repub-

lic. This could, however, have but little effect, after Czar ALEXANDER III. had once overcome this inborn dislike and closed with the republic an unprejudiced alliance. Later, in 1904 and 1905, came the exceedingly strange attempt to draw France into a Russian-German alliance. This may well be considered as the culminating point of the entire correspondence.

Undoubtedly it would have been a full triumph for the KAISER'S policy had he been able now to effect new and clearly defined arrangements with Russia. Not only would this have disposed of the charges based on his non-renewal of BISMARCK'S "reinsurance" treaty, which had guaranteed to Germany the friendly neutrality of Russia in case of an attack of France, and there would thus have been inaugurated a better and more honest form of coöperation with Russia; but the policy of EDWARD VII. would also have met with a serious obstacle, and the French hope for revenge would have been ultimately doomed. The refusal of the English alliance offer of 1898 and 1901, which meant the critical turning-point for the entire position of Germany, would have been counterbalanced; she would have won new safety. All this makes it easy to understand the exulting satisfaction which beams forth from the letters written by the KAISER at that time.

But very soon it was to become plain that the weavers of this loom had been working entirely without BISMARCK'S masterly hand. The very first intimations contained in the KAISER'S letter of July 27th about the secret treaty are surprising: so this alliance, which would indeed have taken a foremost rank in the annals of history, had been closed by the two emperors in a personal conference of one day's duration, without the coöperation of the authoritative ministers?

The chancellor of the German Empire received confidential information only *after* the KAISER's return from his journey, and the same thing happened with the Russian minister of the exterior.

But if there still existed a remnant of political sagacity, now was the time for it when the seriousness of the matter forced itself on the understanding; when a way had to be found to escape this desperate situation. It sounds like the statement of a man either totally blind or clearly strained in his utterances, when on January 29th, 1906, the KAISER resorts to a coarse jest about the "woodcutter Fallières" (meaning the president of the French Republic) in attempting to get rid of the significant fact that the CZAR wants to receive a French aide-de-camp in his suite; so funny does this arrangement look to the KAISER that he can hardly check his mirth. Was he really unable to see how France was beginning to eclipse him even in the CZAR's personal surroundings? And furthermore: in June, 1906, the KAISER learned, from what the CZAR told him, that England was trying to come to an understanding with Russia about Asia. Not even this fact prompts the KAISER to take up the concrete questions that are to be solved; it merely causes him to become worked up again and again about the "Yellow Peril," which he believes to have discovered, and which according to him is to help bridge over the conflicting interests in Europe and the near east. It would appear that he fails to recognize, while thus reasoning, that the differences between Japan and America, Japan and Russia are of a political and economic nature, and that the alliance of England with Japan satisfied the immediate interests of both countries more satis-

factorily than a crusade of the white against the yellow race would have done.

Thus the political accomplishments of these letters are not especially encouraging. In fact, they allow the reader to look only into details, but not into the whole of the German-Russian relations. Several of the most important questions, for instance the Russian suggestion to interfere in the Boer War, are not referred to in the letters as we have them. But they do show how a policy went to grief which had attempted to solve the gravest problems with insufficient means. They show the KAISER not as the nation's political leader, but filled with untenable ideas as to the vocation of a sovereign and international politics, and they show us the difficulties under which the responsible functionaries of the imperial government had to work the entire time. Yet, one thing these letters disclose without any doubt: never has the KAISER occupied himself with schemes of attack, with preparations for the world war. The dominating thought in every instance is how to assure peace. That he wanted to see Germany and Russia as the center of the league which was to guarantee peace, needs no defense. For he had to transact German, not French or English politics. In making efforts to free Russia from the French and English embrace, he acted within his rights (however inadequate were his means); the very course of events has proven that this embrace ultimately meant the world war. That the KAISER wanted to avoid this war, is demonstrated by these letters, and this is what makes them historical documents which will bear testimony against our enemies as long as an impartial science of history will exist.

Valuable as the contemporary comment on the Kaiser's letters is, the final judgment on them and

their author must be left to the future when passions and prejudices will have given way to calm investigation and impartial analysis. History will announce its own sentence on the Kaiser only when the letters of his correspondents, Czar Nicholas of Russia, King Edward of England, Francis Joseph of Austria-Hungary, the Sultan of Turkey and the Balkan kings are revealed to the world. So far only the archives of the Romanoffs have been made public by the Russian Government. What a boon to humanity it would be if the enormous volume of truth lying buried in the archives of a dozen European courts, existing and extinct, were suddenly to be disclosed to humanity!

ISAAC DON LEVINE.

Chicago,
April, 1920.

I

Neues Palais, 8/xi/94

My dear Nicky

The heavy and responsible task for which Providence has destinied you has come upon you with the suddeness of a surprise, through the so unexpected and untimely death of your dear lamented father.[1] These lines are to express my fullest and warmest sympathy with you and your Alix [2] and your poor distressed mother.[3] I can well understand the feelings which must have agitated your heart in witnessing the ebbing away of the life of your father, as his illness and sudden passing away was so very like my own dear Papa's;[4] with whose character and kind geniality the late Czar had so many likness. My prayers to God for you and your happiness are unceasing. May heaven comfort you in your grief and give you strength for your heavy duties, and may a long and peaceful reign give you the opportunity of looking after the welfare of your subjects. The sympathy and real grief at the so untimely end of your lamented father in my country will have shown you how strong the monarchical instinct is and how Germany feels for you and your subjects.

As former you will always find me the same in undiminished friendship and love to you. What our political ideals are we both know perfectly and I have nothing to add to our last conversation in Berlin,[5] I only can repeat the expression of absolute trust in you and the assurance that I shall always cultivate the old relations of mutual friendship with your house in which I was reared by my Grandfather,[6] and some examples of which I was so glad to be able to give to your dear Papa in these last six months of his reign, and which I am happy to hear were fully appreciated by him. I would have come myself to pray with you at the funeral,[7] but I have so much to do with administration at home that it is impossible. Henry will be the bearer of my messages, Gen. v. Plessen,[8] commandant of my Headquarters, Lieut. Col. v. Moltke [9] my Aide de Camp, and Gen. v. Villaune [10] your old friend will accompany him on board his ship to Cronstadt. At the same time by land Col. v. Saussin of the Kaiser Alexander Garde Grend. Reg. I. will report himself to you as the new Chef of the Regiment. Whereas to your Regiment of Hussars[11] I have given your name of which they will be immensely proud. In the first named Guard Regiment the person of the late Tsar was always highly venered and last Mondays the whole corps of its officers and the four Colours of the Reginal joined their prayers with mine of the chapel of the Russian Embassy at Berlin. Now, dearest Nicky, Good bye, God bless and

protect you and dear Alix and give you happiness in your new married life, that is the warm wish of

Your most aff-ate and devoted
friend and cousin
William.

NOTES

1. Alexander III., the father of Nicholas II., died at Livadia on November 1st, 1894.
2. Princess Alix of Hesse, to whom Nicholas was betrothed. They were married 18 days after the date of this letter, on November 26th, 1894.
3. The Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna, formerly Princess Dagmar of Denmark.
4. Emperor Frederick.
5. The conversation referred to took place on January 28th, 1894.
6. William I., the first German emperor.
7. The funeral of the late Czar took place on November 19th, 1894. Prince Henry of Prussia represented the Kaiser.
8. Von Plessen was commandant of the Kaiser's headquarters since 1892.
9. Lieutenant-Colonel von Moltke—a nephew of the great Moltke —was the Kaiser's aide-de-camp since 1891. From 1906 to December, 1914, he was Chief of the German General Staff.
10. Von Villaune is probably General Carl von Villauny.
11. The 8th Hussars.

II

POTSDAM, 5/1/95.

My dear Nicky

Your kind letter which Knorring brought to me involved very interesting but very sad news. I am very thankful for your explanation and fully understand the motives which prompt you to decide about Count Schouvaloff.[1] In the same time I can assure you that I am deeply grieved at losing excellent Paul, who was the *only* ambassador at Berlin with whom I was on really intimate terms and who was an "ami intime" to me as far as a non-German could claim such name. I will miss him very much indeed! He fully deserves the eulogies you gave him in your rescript and the near and intimate relations of our Courts and People could not have been better looked after than by him. I hope and trust that the person whom you are going to select to replace him will be able to carry on the work in the same manner and with the same thruthfullness and openess of character like Schouvaloff; as the relations of our two countries rest on traditional bases, quite other than those with other nations, and are of commanding influence on the whole of the world! At your dear Fathers

express wish I replaced Schweinitz[2] by Werder, if I could at the same time express a wish, it would be that you chose either Pahlen,[3] Richter[4] or Staal[5] as remplaçants if possible.[6]

Now let me wish you a Happy New Year at the side of that dear Angel Alix, and may it be a year of peace and prosperity! My Xmas gift will I hope amuse you, it is an album with photos from the Fahnenweihe at Berlin.

Hoping that we shall be able to meet each other somewhere this year

I remain
Your most aff-ate friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Count Schouvaloff was one of Russia's foremost diplomats. He was Russian Ambassador to London in 1878, during the Berlin Conference. On January 3rd, 1895, he was transferred from his post as Russian ambassador in Berlin, which he filled for nine years, to the Governor-Generalship of Warsaw.
2. General von Schweinitz was German ambassador in Petrograd until 1892, when after Bismarck's fall, he was replaced by General von Werder.
3. Count von der Pahlen a high dignitary of the Russian court.
4. General Richter was chief of the Czar's Military Household.
5. Georges de Staal was Russian ambassador in London from 1884 to 1903.
6. The Kaiser's suggestions were ignored by the Czar, and Count Osten-Sacken was appointed to succeed Count Schouvaloff.

III

BERLIN 7/11/95

Dearest Nicky

Egloffstein[1] will, I hope, be able to bring over the whole heap of porcelain without any breakage. He is instructed to arrange the table so as it would be if you gave a dinner for 50; so that you should have the coup d'oeil of the whole affair. I hope that my manufacturer has done everything to fulfill your wishes and that the present may be useful to you both.

Since the sad weeks you had to go through have passed much has happened in Europe. You have lost an excellent old servant of your predecessors, old Giers,[2] who was a very good fellow whom I much esteemed. France has changed par surprise her head and government[3] and through the amnesty opened the doors to all the worst malefactors the former people with difficulty had managed to imprison. The impulse given to the Democrats and the Revolutionary party is also to be felt here. My Reichstag[4] behaves as badly as it can, swinging backwards and forwards between the socialists egged on by the Jews, and the ultramontane Catholiks; both

parties beeing soon fit to be hung all of them, as far as I can see.

In England the ministry[5] is toddling on to its fall amidst universal derision! In short everywhere the "principe de la Monarchie" is called upon to show itself strong. That is why I am so glad at the capital speech[6] you made other day to the deputations in response to some addresses for reform. It was very much to the point and made a deep impression everywhere.

For the opening of our Canal[7] in the end of June I have invited all European Governments to send warships to Kiel, I hope your fleet will also be represented by a ship or two?

With my respects to your Mamy and many compliments to Alix, I remain

Your most aff-ate friend
Willy

NOTES

1. A Marshal of the Kaiser's Court, who conveyed Wilhelm's wedding present to the Czar.
2. Nicholas de Giers was Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs since 1882.
3. M. Casimir-Périer, President of the French Republic, resigned on January 15th, 1895, when the Dupuy Cabinet was overthrown by the Chamber. M. Félix Faure was elected President on January 17th, and on January 26th, M. Ribot formed a Cabinet which introduced and carried a bill giving amnesty to political offenders.

4. On December 6th, 1894, at the first sitting in the new Reichstag building, six socialists refused to rise when the president called for three cheers for the Kaiser.
5. The Roseberry government fell on June 21st, 1895.
6. The historic speech made by the young Czar on January 29th, in reply to a deputation of the Zemstvos come to plead for reforms. Nicholas II. spoke of the reforms asked by the Zemstvos as "unrealizable dreams," concluding his speech with the memorable words, "I shall uphold the principle of autocracy as firmly and unflinchingly as did my ever-lamented father."
7. The Kiel Canal was opened on June 21st, 1895.

IV

KALTENBRONN [1] SCHWARZWALD 16/IV 95

Dearest Nicky

As Prince Radolin[2] leaves shortly for Petersburg I send these few lines by him. He is an excellent and warm friend of mine, who has been proved by the difficult task he had when beeing Papa's Chief of the Household during his short reign he stubbornly resisted any trials of intrigue from any side. You may place *full* and *implicit* confidence in him, his discreetness is proverbial and he is burning to do everything in his power to please us both and to tighten the traditional ties which unite our families and countries since nearly a century. He hates the Poles and has no more to do with them or interest in them than with the Sandwich Islanders.

I thank you sincerely for the excellent way in which you initiated the combined action of Europe[3] for the sake of its interests against Japan. It was high time that energetic steps were taken, and will make an excellent impression in Japan as elsewhere. It shows to evidence how necessary it is that we should hold together, and also that there is existant a base of common interests upon which *all* European

nations may work in *joint action* for the welfare of all as is shown by the adherence of France to us two. May the conviction that this can be done without touching a nations honour, take root more and more firmly, then no doubt the fear of war in Europe will dissipate more and more. The kind and most valuable messages which you sent me through Osten Sacken[4] by Count Eulenburgs transmission in Vienna have given me a signal proof of your loyalty and openness towards me. I shall certainly do all in my power to keep Europe quiet and also guard the rear or Russia so that nobody shall hamper your action towards the Far East! For that is clearly the great task of the future for Russia to cultivate the Asian Continent and to defend Europe from the inroads of the Great Yellow race. In this you will always find me on your side ready to help you as best I can. You have well understood that call of Providence and have quickly grasped the moment; it is of immense political and historical value and much good will come of it. I shall with interest await the further development of our action and hope that, just as I will gladly help you to settle the question of eventual annexations[5] of portions of territory for Russia, you will kindly see that Germany may also be able to acquire a Port somewhere were it does not "gêne" you. I am afraid that, as the Norwegians[6] are in a state bordering on insanity I may not be able to make my summer tour there, but shall have to cruise about on the Swedish coast of the Baltic.

Should that be the case, could not we have a meeting somewhere for our two yachts were it suits you and have quiet little chat between ourselves? It would be so nice. Now good bye dearest Nicky, give my best love to Alix and respectful compliments to your Mama, from Ever

Your most devoted and affate friend
Willy

P.S. Radolin is quite "eingeweiht" in all my ideas I just developed to you.

NOTES

1. Shooting box in Black Forest near Wildbad.
2. German ambassador in Constantinople, 1892-1895; in Petrograd, 1895-1901; in Paris, 1901-1910. He succeeded General von Werder at Petrograd.
3. The protest of Russia, France and Germany made on April 24th against the Chinese-Japanese Treaty of Shimonoseki of April 17th, which forced Japan to give up the Liao-tung peninsula and Port Arthur.
4. Count Nicholas Osten-Sacken, Russian ambassador in Berlin.
5. These annexations were Germany's seizing of Kiao-Chau, Russia's seizing of Port Arthur and England's seizing of Wei-hai-wei in 1898.
6. Norway was in the midst of a great political crisis. Ten years later the separation of Norway and Sweden took place.

V

Stora Sundby 10/vii 95

Dearest Nicky

My journey in Sweden and along its shores bring me opposite to your shores and to your *buen retiro,* and I cannot let this moment pass, when I am only a short cruize away from you, without sending you a line as I shall not unhappily be able to meet you on the salty brine. Let me once more thank you with all my heart for the sending of those splendid ships[1] of yours, which so ably and powerfully represented the Russian Navy at Kiel. Alexei[2] was kindness and joviality itself and did everything in his power to make intercourse with our Russian comrades everything that could be wished for. Your kind permission to place him à la suite of our navy made my officers very proud and seemed to have given him pleasure. I had the opportunity of some serious talk about Eastern Asian Affairs with Alexei and also his good old Baron Schilling who was a very great friend of my Grandfathers. He will I suppose already have reported to you about it. I was glad to be able to show, how our interests were entwined in the Far East, that my ships had been or-

dered to second yours in case of need when things looked doubtful. That Europe had to be thankful to you that you so quickly had perceived the great future for Russia in the cultivation of Asia and in the Defense of the Cross and the old Christian European culture against the inroads of the Mongols and Buddhism, that it was natural that if Russia was engaged in this tremendous work you wished to have Europe quiet and your back free; and that it was natural and without doubt that this would be my task and that I would let nobody try to interfere with you and attack from behind in Europe during the time you were fullfilling the great mission which Heaven has shaped for you. That was as sure as Amen in Church! One incident took place of which I think I ought to tell you as I am quite certain that it happened without Alexei's knowledge, but having become known among our officers created a very painful impression. On board the Grossiaschtschy—the vessel which *I invited* Admiral Skrydlow[3] and his Captains to pass the Canal with—two Engineer Officers were secretly embarked which had not been announced to our Authorities. The Eldest was Colon. Bubnow. These in conjunction with a lieutenant who is specially trained for the purpose and who had a large apparatus took photographs of our Forts and batteries made notes and sketches all along the road and finally—when Skrydlow saw that my Naval Attaché was rather astonished to see

quite strange people on the ship—were introduced to him as two directors of waterworks and waterways! At Kiel Bubnow's bearing became so "suspecte" that Police and Gendarmes followed him. He went about in plain clothes and was prowling about the fortifications, which was strictly forbidden to strangers!

Now I think this is not quite fair, if you are invited as guest at such a fête in a foreign country which without reserve throws open its gates to you and lets you into its war harbour, to abuse of hospitality in this manner, to try to spy out your friend and that even under assumed character! The consequence is that this will make people very careful with Russian warships and creates uneasy feelings which I so deplore and hope to overcome. Pray excuse my mentioning this matter, but I thought it better to tell you directly instead of making diplomatic notes etc. as you know how I feel for you and Russia. But I do wish to have every difficulty which could arise in the work of drawing our countries closer together, removed before it strikes root.

Goodbye dearest Nicky my best love to Alix and to you, with wishes for a quiet summer and a nice little boy to come believe me dear Nicky

Ever your most affectionate
friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. The "Imperator Alexander II." and the "Rurik."
2. Grand Duke Alexei, an uncle of the Czar, was for many years the Commander in Chief of the Russian Navy.
3. Commander of the Russian Squadron at Kiel. Later Skrydlow became Chief of the Russian Admiralty.

VI

Jagdhaus Rominten[1] 26/ix 95.

Dearest Nicky

My Uncle the Chancellor[2] referring to the kind and sympathetic way with which you received him, has owned himself quite won by your manner, and was profoundly impressed by your knowledge about the political situation and the quiet and calm manner with which you judged the questions of interest. He also told me that you expressed a wish that I should continue the custom, which we have begun, of writing to you if I thought there was occasion for it, I do this with pleasure. The situation in the Far East has given you the opportunity of discussing it with my uncle. I thank you for the way in which you kindly alluded to my cooperation with Russia and the coaling station question. The development of the Far East, especially its danger to Europe and our Christian Faith is a matter which has been greatly on my mind ever since we made our first move together in Spring. At last my thoughts developed into a certain form and this I sketched on paper. I worked it out with an Artist[3]—a first class draughtsman—and after it was finished had it engraved for

public use. It shows the Powers of Europe represented by their respective Genii called together by the Arch-Angel Michael,—sent from Heaven,—to *unite* in resisting the inroad of Buddhism, heathenism and barbarism for the Defence of the Cross. Stress is especially laid on the *united* resistance of *all* European Powers, which is just as necessary also against our common internal foes, anarchism, republicanism, nihilism. I venture to send you an engraving begging you to accept it as a token of my warm and sincere friendship to you and Russia. In the midst of these peaceful occupations and of the quiet hunting fell the astounding news I got from Paris that the French Chamber's Budget Committee[4] in discussing the Military Budget propose to recall the XIX Corps (Algiers and Tunis) and to form a *new* continental Corps on *my Western Frontier!* This, recall has only been done once before in 1870 when France made war on us, such a project in the deepest times of Peace, has fallen like a thunderbolt on Germany and has created a deep feeling of alarm. This has been deepened by the fact that the proposal became publicly known the Moment after Prince Lobanoff[5] and Gen. Dragomiroff had officially assisted the Review of the French "Border Army" on the Lorraine Frontier amidst the frenetic enthusiasm of the "Border People." This Army which the French Papers are telling us since weeks is meant for the first rush on our "Border Land" is the Revanche War! It is already 4 Corps strong against

my 2 (XV, XVI). The proposed new Corps would increase the allready overwhelming French forces to 5 Corps, and constitutes a threat as well as a serious danger to my country. Of course upon this I must now began to take matters seriously. For this event happening in the moment your officers are being decorated and Lobanoff feted, whilst my attache's ears were greeted with not over agreeable remarks, has made people uneasy here and given affairs an ugly look, as if Russia would like France to be offensive against Germany with the hopes of help from the first named. Such a serious danger will cause me to strongly increase my army, to be able to cope with such fearful odds. Heavy as the financial strain would weigh on us, my People would never waver a moment to guarantee their security should this be necessary. I perfectly know that *you* personally do not dream of attacking us, but still you cannot be astonished that the European Powers get alarmed seeing how the presence of your officers and high officials in *official* way in France fans the inflamable Frenchmen into a white heated passion and strengthens the cause of Chauvinism and Revanche!

God knows that I have done all in my power to preserve the European Peace, but if France goes on openly or secretly encouraged like this to violate all rules of international courtesy and Peace in peacetimes, one fine day my dearest Nicky you will find yourself nolens volens suddenly embroiled in the most horrible of wars Europe ever saw! Which

will by the masses and by history perhaps be fixed on you as the cause of it. Pray don't be angry, if I perhaps hurt you quite unintentiously, but I think it my duty to our two countries and to you as my friend to write openly. As the seclusion and retirement the deep mourning has imposed upon you, debars you from seeing people and following in detail what is happening—*behind the scenes.*

I have some experience of Politics, and see certain unmistakable symptoms, so I hasten to you, my friend, to plead in the name of the Peace of Europe; if you are allied "for better, for worse" with the French, well then, keep those damned rascals in order and make them sit still, if not then dont let your Men who go to France make the French believe that you are allied and get reckless and turn their heads till they lose them, and we have to fight in Europe instead for it against the East! Think of the awful responsibility for the shocking bloodshed! Now Goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to dear Alix and believe me Ever your most devoted and faithful

friend and Cousin

Willy

I. R.[6]

NOTES

1. In East Prussia, near the Russian frontier, where the Kaiser had a shooting box.

2. Prince von Hohenlohe, who succeeded Caprivi on October 29th, 1894. He had come to Petrograd on September 10th.
3. The artist was Professor Knackfuss of Cassel.
4. The Committee was at this time considering the formation of a Colonial Army.
5. Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was sent together with Dragomiroff by the Czar to the French Army maneuvers in the neighborhood of Mirecourt in September, 1895.
6. Imperator Rex.

VII

Neues Palais Potsdam 25/x/95.

Dearest Nicky

Uncle Micha's[1] most joyful and unexpected arrival who just lunched with us, gives me an agreeable opportunity to warmly thank you for your kind letter Moltke brought home. He is still quite full of all your kindness and quite enraptured by your whole person and your ways. Your ideas about the press in general are exactly the same as mine, it has done and still continues to do a deal of harm and we must bear with a great amount of spite, lying and nonsense. Still the influence it horribile dictu has must be judged from the spirit of the People of the different races are brought up and read it. Your subjects and mine are slower at thought, sober and quieter in their conclusions they draw as for instance Southerners or the French. The Roman or Gallic races are more easily roused, incensed and more ready to jump to conclusions, and once having flared up are more dangerous to peace than the Teutonic or Russian Race. Again in England the Press is more the mouthpiece of Public opinion than on the Continent and goes in more for the interests of its Country!

Lobanows visit[2] was most interesting to me, he is no doubt a very able Diplomatist and a splendid causeur, and what he told me was "sehr beruhigend"[3] about France. I thought it right to talk quite openly about France with him as he told me you had communicated with him. In one respect I took pains to show him that I did not wish to be misunderstood. That it is not a *fact* of the "Rapport" or friendship between Russia and France that makes one uneasy—every Sovereign is sole master of his countrie's interests and he shapes his policy accordingly—but the danger which is brought to our Principle of Monarchism through the lifting up the Republic on a piedestal by the form under which the friendship is shown. The constant appearance of Princes, Granddukes, statesmen, generals in "full fig" at reviews, burials, dinners, races with the head of the Republic or in his entourage makes Republicains—as such—believe that they are quite honest excellent people, with whom Princes can consort and feel at home! Now what is the consequence at home in our different countries were the Republicans are Revolutionists de natura and treated—rightly too—as people who must be shot or hung, they tell our other loyal subjects: "Oh we are no dangerous bad men, look at France! There you see the Royalties hobnobbing with the Revolutionaires! Why should it not be the same with us?" The R.F.[4] is from the source of the great Revolution and propagates and is bound to do so, the ideas

of it. Don't forget that Faure—not his personal fault—sits on the throne of the King and Queen of France "by the Grace of God" whose heads Frenchmen Republicans cut off! The Blood of their Majesties is still on that country! Look at it, has it since then ever been happy or quiet again? Has it not staggered from bloodshed to bloodshed? And in its great moments did it not go from war to war? till it soused all Europe and Russia in streams of blood? Till at last it had the Commune over again? Nicky take my word on it the curse of God has stricken that People for ever! We Christian Kings and Emperors have one holy duty imposed on us by Heaven, that is to uphold the Principle "von Gottes Gnaden"[5] we can have good relations with the R. F. but never be intime with her! I always fear that in frequent and long visits in France people without feeling it imbibe Republican ideas. Here I must tell you an example! I remember a few years ago a gentleman—no German—telling me full of horror that when he was at a fashionable salon in Paris he heard a Russian General answer a French ones question wether Russia would smash the German Army, answer *"Oh nous serons battu à plate couture, mais quesque ça fait? Nous aurons alors aussi la République"!*[6] That is what I am afraid of for you my dear Nicky! Dont forget Skobelew[7] and his plan for carrying off the Imperial family at a dinner once? Therefore take care that your Generals dont like the R. F. too much. Please forgive

my beeing so open but I want you to see how warmly I feel for you and how anxious I am about you, and that you should fully know what my motives are.

The next point of interest was the news Lobanow told me about Turky; that he had cause to suspect England was after the Dardanells! And therefore had revived the Armenian question.[8] I confess that I was utterly stupefied at this piece of news. No doubt since Salisbury's avenement England's foreign policy has become most mysterious and unintelligible, and the quaint way in which the Fleet sulks around the Dardanells indicates that it means something there. But if they do that they violate the Treaty of Berlin and this they cannot be allowed to do without the permission of all the other signatory Powers; which they never will do. But it seems that they have some Idea or other of changing their Policy in the Mediterranean, for two days ago Malet[9] on paying his farewell visit to our Foreign Office used very blustering words, about Germany behaving badly to England in Africa,[10] that it would not stand it any longer and that after bying off the French by concessions in Egypt they were at liberty to look after us. He even was so undiplomatic to utter the word "war." Saying that even England would not shrink from making war upon me if we did not knock down in Africa. I have made an answer to the effect that the British were making themselves ridiculous in this case, but obnoxious to everybody, and if they got into trouble with any-

body else I would not move a Pomeranian Grenadier[11] to help them. I suppose that will cool them. It is the same thing I told Lobanow. I told him besides that if Russia should be seriously engaged in the Far East I looked upon it as my duty to keep your back free from anybody in Europe and to see that all kept quiet, and that nothing would happen from me also to France, provided I was not attacked. He warmly thanked me for this. I share his fear that Japan has some sort of understanding with England and that is why it is so stiffbacked.

Before concluding let me express my most heartfelt sympathy for the I of November[12] now approaching. God alone can soothen the pangs of sorrow that will rend your hart on mourning such a kind father and such an excellent and good man, so like my poor Papa! May I propose something to you which I have at heart? Considering our near relations and the constant exchange of letters and messages, which would unecessarily always put the Embassy machines in motion, would not you like to renew the old custom our Forefathers had for nearly a century and have again a personal aide de camp attached to our respective staffs? The more private and "intime" affairs could as in olden times go directly by them, which makes matters much simpler? I shall take with pleasure anybody whom you really trust into my Maison militaire, would you like Moltke? Now I shant trouble you any longer!

Goodbye dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and the "future," and believe me allways

Your most devoted and aff-ate
friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. Grand Duke Michael.
2. Lobanow or Lobanoff, the Russian Foreign Minister. He visited the Kaiser at Hubertusstock on October 13th, 1895.
3. Very reassuring.
4. Republique Française.
5. By the grace of God.
6. Oh, we will be smashed to pieces, but what does that matter? We will then also have a republic.
7. The famous Russian General who before his sudden death in 1882 was reported to be the author of a plot to arrest the Czar and proclaim a constitution.
8. Frightful Armenian massacres occurred in 1895.
9. Sir Edward Malet, British ambassador at Berlin, had a special audience with the Kaiser on October 21st in order to present his letters of recall after eleven years in Berlin.
10. At this time it was believed that German agents were trying to obtain a footing in Matabeleland. Another source of friction was Germany's persistence in maintaining direct relations with the Transvaal.
11. This is a reference to Bismarck's declaration that the Eastern Question, so far as Germany was concerned, was not worth "the sound bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier."
12. The anniversary of the death of Czar Alexander III.

VIII

Neues Palais 2/1/96.

Dearest Nicky

Radolin's return to Petersburg gives me the opportunity of sending you a few lines. Please let me thank you most sincerely for the many signs of kindness and friendship you have given me and my country, which has given a sense of quitness and security, and which I beg you will continue to bestow on us in the following year.

With my warmest congratulations for the New Year and a merry Xmas I join my prayers that the Lord may bless and protect you, dear Alix, your sweet child[1] and all your family from all Evil, sorrow or sickness. May your reign be prosperous and may you see the realisation of many a scheme you have elaborated for the welfare of your subjects. May our countries be able as before to join in the strengthening and upholding of Peace and in the defence of their faith and interests against any outward or inward foe.

The political horizon is peculiar just now. Armenian and Venezuela[2] are open questions England brought up, and now suddenly the Transval Repub-

lic[3] has been attacked in a most foul way as it seems without Englands knowledge. I have used very severe language in London, and have opened communications with Paris for common defence of our endangered interests, as French and German colonists have immediately joined hands of their own accords to help the outraged boers. I hope you will also kindly consider the question, as it is one of principle of upholding treaties once concluded. I hope that all will come right but come what may I never shall allow the British to stamp out the Transvaal! I hope you have better news for your poor brother[4] who has arrived as I see at the Riviera!

Please give my best love to dear Alix and once more thanking you for all kindness to Strantz and his men believe me dear Nicky

Ever
Your most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Grand Duchess Olga, born November 3rd, 1895.
2. In October, 1895, Great Britain presented an ultimatum to the Venezuelan Government in the Guiana-Venezuela dispute. Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Venezuela were suspended in 1887 and not restored until 1897.
3. The Jameson Raid began on December 29th, 1895, and ended with the unconditional surrender of the raiders on January 2nd, 1896, the day this letter was written to the Czar. At the same time the Kaiser sent his famous telegram to Presi-

dent Krüger, which read as follows: "I express my sincere congratulations that, supported by your people and without appealing for the help of friendly Powers, you have succeeded by your own energetic action against armed bands which invaded your country as disturbers of the peace, and have thus been able to restore peace and safeguard the independence of the country against attacks from outside.—William."

4. Grand Duke George, the second son of Alexander III., who was suffering from consumption and who died in the Crimea in 1899.

IX

BERLIN 20/II 96

Dearest Nicky

General Werder has the great pleasure and honour to be your guest and so I entrust this letter to his care. Let me once more thank you with all my heart for the picture and the letter you sent me for my birthday.[1] The attention was most kind and gracious at the same time, as the opening of the Canal was indeed something which I had very much at heart and which really was a success. I have sent the picture to Kiel where it is to be hung in my private apartments, the same in which your dear lamented father lived the last time he met me at Kiel. Werder will also be the bearer of two photographs. One for you, as a little souvenir of mine and one for Alix, to give her an idea of what my girl[2] looks like. She is a real piece of living quicksilver and tyrannises her papa tremendously.

Your Embassy has enquired about my beeing represented at the Coronation[3] at Moskau and I have named Henry as my representant. I should be very thankful if you would kindly see that the question of his rank is made out clearly, as I heard that your

Master of Ceremonies has hinted to Radolin that he would have to follow all the *Hereditary* German Granddukes and Princes, even the son of the Prince of Montenegro. This is of course out of the question. My house as the reigning one in Germany is the first, and the Princes belonging to it go before the sons of the *Reigning Princes* in Germany. I asked Wladimir[4] about this when he was here, and he was of quite the same opinion, and told me he would mention the matter to you. Besides he is your brother in law,[5] and as such he counts as one of your family, just as your Papa did for the Duke of Edinbourgh[6] at his coronation.

I saw Aunt Sanny[7] at Oldenburg and on her passage here. She is very much affected by the slow and harrassing death of her poor sister, and suffers much from sleeplessness, poor thing!

The Blue Book[8] in Parliament in London has once more proved how right your policy was in Oriental matters and how England has tried to get you and us others into trouble. In Transvaal their Coup de Bourse was miscarried by the will of Providence, and though some lives were lost, yet revolution, bloodshed and general pillage have been stopped. They have behaved very improperly to me, but that leaves me untouched, whereas their mobilising their celebrated Flying Squadron[9] against us, who have hardly anything to speak of, made them supremely ridiculous.

Now good by dearest Nicky, best love to Alix, and believe me

Ever
Your most devoted Cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. On the Kaiser's birthday, January 27th, the Russian ambassador in Berlin, Count Osten-Sacken, presented him with an autograph letter from the Czar and an oil painting representing Kiel Harbor at the moment of the opening of the Canal. The German Imperial yacht "Hohenzollern" was shown passing the Russian flagship "Alexander II."
2. The Kaiser's youngest child, Princess Victoria Louise, born September 13th, 1892, and married to Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Brunswick, in 1913.
3. The Czar was crowned on May 26th, 1896.
4. Grand Duke Wladimir, the Czar's uncle.
5. Prince Henry of Prussia married Princess Irene of Hesse, elder sister of the Czarina.
6. When the Czar Alexander III. was crowned on May 27th, 1883, the Duke of Edinburgh, who had married the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, the Czar's sister, followed immediately after the members of the Imperial family.
7. Grand Duchess Alexandra Josefovna, Princess of Saxe-Altenborg, married to the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaevitch.
8. A Blue Book on the Armenian question was issued in London on February 17th, 1896. A Blue Book on the Transvaal was issued on February 12th.
9. The squadron, commissioned on January 9th, 1896, consisted of two first-class battleships, two first-class cruisers, and two second-class cruisers.

X

Coburg 19/iv 96.

Dearest Nicky

The merry wedding[1] which is taking place here and the faces of many of the guests remind me of two years ago when it was my good fortune to be able to help you to secure that charming and accomplished angel who is now Yours wife. The reminiscaises of april 1894[2] were also felt by the others and from that cause they all agreed that we should send You the telegram You will have got. I venture to trust that I did not say or promise then anything that You have not afterwards found in Your matrimonial life. May Gods blessing be on You both especially in the next month when You are going to be crowned under the admiring assisstance of the world. I thank You most heartily for Yours kind letter You sent me through Werder the day I left for the Mediterranean, he was so happy over his stay in Petersburg, having seen so many well known faces. I quite agree with what You say in the end of Yours letter about the Britishers, there fanfarronades against us make them supremly ridiculous, and no impression on me. The worse they are ham-

pered in Afrika, the better for us in Asia. Now good bye dear Nicky, best love to Alix and Godspeed from your aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. That of Princess Alexandra of Coburg to the Hereditary Prince of Hohenlohe-Langenburg.
2. April 1895.—The engagement of the Czar, then Czarevitch, to Princess Alix of Hesse took place at Coburg in April, 1894, where she and the Czarevitch were staying for the wedding of Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg and the Grand Duke of Hesse.

XI

LETZLINGEN 12/XI 96.

Dearest Nicky

Wladimir[1] is so kind as to take this lines with him to hand them over to you and will also be the bearer of my warmest "Grusse."[2] I am glad you are safe home again and that the brilliant tour[3] you made through Europe has not tired you too much.

I am deeply sorry for the awful Bismarkian behaviour[4] which—though it is a "coup" solely aimed against me personally—nevertheless represents a breach of loyalty to your Government, and casts a slur on the memories of my beloved grandfather as well as on that of your beloved father. I have allready instructed my uncle the Chancellor how to speak in Parliament[5] and hope you will be satisfied with the manner in which the whole treasonable affair is treated. I suppose that by this last stroke of the Prince and by the shameless way he is treating me in his press—especially trying to make the people believe that I was and still am under *"English"* influence—the clearer heads will begin to understand that I had reasons to send this unruly man with his mean caracter out of office. I place implicit faith

in the hopes that you will kindly trust me as you did till now and that nothing has or can change between us two since we arranged our line of action at Breslau.[6] Wladimir has come from Paris with the best of impression that all is quiet there, which I can corroborate from the reports of my ambassador[7] who is on the best of terms with the Government and is quite full of admiration for the capabilities and sang froid of Hanotaux.[8] The latter I hear is rather nervous about Turky, but as I have heard nothing alarming from there I suppose there is no real cause, he, I hear, is strongly opposed to any conference about Turky and in that is perfectly right.

On our frontier in Lithuania we have discovered and lokalised several cases of leprosy. Some people have brought the infection over from the next places in the Baltic Provinces. I consequently have ordered a hospital to be built at Memel to place the poor wretches in it. The illness is a terrible one, and very catching, and I propose to you wether our frontier Provincial authorities could not combine in watching and looking for cases, by combining some Doctors for medicine supervision?

We have had magnificent sport and fine weather and were very glad to see Wladimir here in his old place. With best love to Alix

Your affectionnate
friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. A dinner was given in honor of the Grand Duke Wladimir at the New Palace, Potsdam, on November 11th. On the following day the Grand Duke accompanied the Kaiser on a shooting expedition to Letzlingen where this letter was written.
2. Greetings.
3. The Czar and Czarina had visited Austria, Germany, Denmark, England and France, returning to Petrograd on October 31st, 1896. The Czar met the Kaiser at Breslau on September 5th and again on his return journey at Wiesbaden on October 29th.
4. Bismarck was at the time asserting in his press that under his guidance the relations between Russia and Germany were friendly and that his successors were responsible for the deterioration of these relations.
5. The debate on the Secret Reinsurance Treaty took place in the Reichstag on November 16th, four days after this letter was written. The Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe, took refuge behind the pledge of absolute secrecy given with regard to the Russo-German negotiations between 1887 and 1890, until which year there was an understanding between the two Powers that if one of them were attacked the other would preserve a benevolent neutrality. The Chancellor expressed the conviction that since 1890 when the secret treaty was said to have lapsed there had been no unfavorable modification in Russo-German relations.
6. It was believed at the time of the Breslau meeting that the Kaiser and Czar had reached complete accord concerning the Eastern Question and decided to maintain the status quo in Turkey.
7. Count von Münster-Ledenburg, German ambassador in Paris since 1885.
8. Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Méline Cabinet.

XII

BERLIN 3/III 97

My dear Nicky

As you kindly permitted, Col. v. Moltke will in a few days have the great honour to be able to pay his respects to his Imperial chef. This gives me the opportunity of sending you a few lines of warm friendship in these trying times. I am most deeply grateful for the loyal, clear and statesmanlike way in which you grasped this most unfortunate Cretan affair,[1] and feel justly proud that our views on this subject are exactly alike. From the "Family"[2] point of view you must have gone through moments which may have taxed your affections to the utmost, and the resolve to do as you did must have been come to after many an internal pang. But you are perfectly right! And you see by the result that your "démarche" has rallied all the Powers, willingly or not, to a common demonstration, which will I hope, make the Peace of Europe an undisturbed one. You have shown the world once more that if the 3 great Empires "marchent d'accord" and are joined by the other great Continental Powers, i.e., if the whole Continent keeps together in an unbroken front, the

rest of the world *must* follow us, even the strongest! The King of Greece must be clean mad if he does not stop in his mad attempt to set the world on fire "pour y allumer sa pipe."[3] I am glad the Turks behaved so soberly and place strong troops into Macedonia! there lies the greatest danger and that must be kept quiet by all means.

I send you with Moltke some instant photographs taken of the Parade after your cravats had been fastened to the colours of the Alexander Regiment. He is also to place into your hands the work which has been written about my dear Grandfather[4] and which is published for the Centenary of his birthday. His fine letters and speeches are the best characteristic of him I know. Our ball[5] went off very well and the effect was simply magical, like a dream of old days gone past!

The cravats which I am going to present my Grenadiers are finished and I should be very thankful for a hint from you wether I can present them myself, or wether you think it better to send our officers with them. Now best love to Alix who I hope will be soon allright and believe me

Ever your most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. This letter was written before the outbreak of war between Greece and Turkey. Greece landed troops in Crete and the

Powers demanded their recall. Russia and Germany were particularly against Greece's aggression.

2. King George of Greece married the Grand Duchess Olga Constantinovna, the second daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine, the Czar's great-uncle.
3. To light his pipe.
4. Probably "The Military Documents of His Majesty Emperor William the Great," published under the auspices of the German war office on March 21st.
5. A fancy dress ball was given by the Emperor on February 27th, all guests being required to wear costumes of the year 1797. The Kaiser appeared in the uniform of a colonel of the 1st Guards Regiment of that period.

XIII

Neues Palais 4/1 1898.

Dearest Niky

The new year has just opened and the old year has closed. But I cannot let it close without a glance at those lovely and brilliant days of August,[1] when I was able to embrace you and Alix, and without thanking you for your kind, splendid even lavish hospitality to Victoria and me. With deep feelings of gratitude do I remember the pleasant hours I was able to spend with you, exchanging intercourse showing that we were of one opinion in the principles we follow in the fullfillment of the task, which has been set us by the Lord of all Lords. Each of us tries to do his best for his country's development and welfare as is his duty! But in community we seek to procure to our countries the blessings of Peace!

May this New Year be a happy one for you dear Alix and the whole of your house and country. May the plans, which you mature be fullfilled for the welfare of your people. Henry's mission[2] is one of the steps I have taken for the help and countenance of your lofty ideals—without which no sovereign can exist—in promoting civilisation i. e. Christianity in

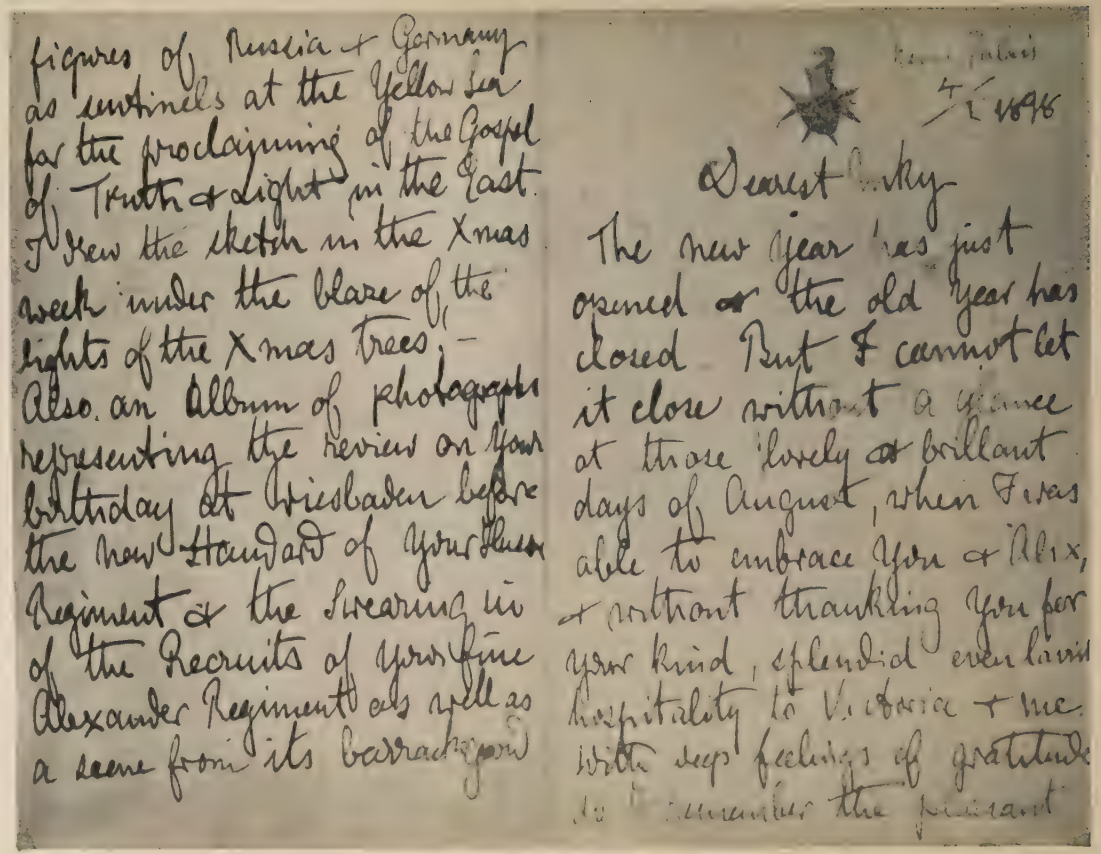
the Far East! Will you kindly accept a drawing I have sketched for you, showing the Symbolising figures of Russia and Germany as sentinels at the Yellow Sea for the proclaiming of the Gospel of Truth and Light in the East. I drew the sketch in the Xmas week under the blaze of the lights of the Xmas trees!—

Also an album of photographs representing the review on your birthday[3] at Wiesbaden before the new Standard of your Hussar Regiment and the Swearing in of the Recruits of your fine Alexander Regiment as well as a scene from its barrack-ground. A book of memoirs of the father on my Chief of the Horse Count Wedel will follow shortly as the binding is not quite finished yet. He served under Napoleon I in 1812 in Russia, was made prisoner by your troops and makes very interesting description of the campaign and of his captivity.—Victoria[4] send her best wishes, she was in bed for a long time and suffered much from nerves and a bad throat and only got up today for the first time. She had much worry on account of the two youngest ones[5] who suffered from a bad attack of influenza which is raging here, and were laid up for nearly a month.

Now good bye dearest Nicky best love to Alix and my most respectful compliments to your dear mama from Your most

devoted and faithful friend and cousin

Willy



figures of Russia & Germany as sentinels at the Yellow Sea for the proclaiming of the Gospel of Truth & Light in the East. I drew the sketch in the Xmas week under the blaze of the lights of the Xmas trees. — Also an Album of photographs representing the review on your birthday at Wiesbaden before the new Standard of your Hussar Regiment & the swearing in of the Recruits of your fine Alexander Regiment as well as a scene from its barracks you

Neues Palais
4/16 1895

Dearest Nicky

The new year has just opened or the old year has closed But I cannot let it close without a glance at those lovely & brilliant days of August, when I was able to embrace You & Alix, & without thanking You for your kind, splendid & even lavish hospitality to Victoria & me. With deep feelings of gratitude I remember the pleasant

LETTER NO. XIII

"I cannot let the year close without a glance at those lovely and brilliant days," writes "Willy" to "Nicky" in letter No. XIII.

NOTES

1. The Kaiser and Kaiserin visited Petrograd, August 7-13, 1897.
2. This mission was defined on December 16 by Prince Henry of Prussia at a banquet at Kiel just before he left in his flagship the "Deutschland" in command of the German squadron for China. In his speech Prince Henry said: "I am only animated by one desire, to proclaim and preach abroad to all who will hear as well as those who will not the Gospel of Your Majesty's Sacred Person."
3. May 6th.
4. The Kaiserin had been suffering from a diphtheritic indisposition.
5. Princess Victoria Louise and Prince Joachim.

XIV

Berlin 28/III 98.

Dearest Nicky

General von Werder brought me your and Alix'es kind messages from Petersburg and was beaming with delight at the souvenirs of his stay which as usual you managed to render so nice and agreeable to him. I thank you most sincerely for all he transmitted to me from you, and need not add that I heartily reciprocate your wishes. The dear old General is not only a relic of the past, but firmly and by conviction deeply attached to you and your house; and he therefore is in my eyes a living piece of the old tradition which allways united our families for the benefit of our countries and by that for the whole world.

I must congratulate you most heartily at the successful issue of your action at Port Arthur;[1] we two will make a good pair of sentinels at the entrance of the gulf of Petchili, who will be duly respected especially by the Yellow Ones! I think the way you managed to soothe the feelings of the "fretful Japs" by the masterly arrangement at Korea[2] a remarkably fine piece of diplomacy and a great show of

foresight; which is apt to show what a boon it was that by your great journey,[3] you were able to study the Question of the Far East locally and are now morally speaking the Master of Peking!

Radolin reported to me your very interesting conversation about China and your wishes about the Instructors in the Governments assumed as under the Russian sphere of influence. I have prepared an order to the German officers, but could not yet emanate it because it was impossible to fix a certain limit of territory without an indication on the map—A small pencil line on any piece of paper from you would, put my mind to rest; because I would be most unhappy if by any misunderstanding the Officers, without their fault, trepassed on Russian territory from want of a real well recognized boundary line. The idea which was beginning to be ventilated from over the Channel in the Press that Chinese affairs were to be decided by an International Conference has been sharply repudiated here by me, for the reason that I soon found that it was a masked attempt to tie your hands in the Far East, the relations to whom I think are after all your own affair and not other peoples! The news from Henry are good, he is at Hongkong refitting his ship. He made good friends with Saissoy Weliky and Navarin[4] at *Colombo* and they sailed together in perfect harmony for some days to the great astonishment of other people! Ahem! Which amuses me much as at the same time it gives me pleasure as Russian Admiral.

Colonel v. Moltke my Aide-de-Camp and Commander of your "Alexanderiner" is the bearer of this letter and at the same time of a box with two hunting rifles of small bore calibre of exceedingly good hitting qualities and a most stretched trajectory—I hope they will be of good use to you and enable you to kill many a good "Capital Hirsch." Now good by dearest Nicky best love to Alix and Weidmannsheil from

Ever Your most aff-ate and devoted friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Russian warships arrived at Port Arthur "to pass the winter" on December 18th, 1897.
2. A treaty was signed between Russia and Japan on February 24th, 1897, for the maintenance of the independence of Korea under their military protection. On March 18th, 1898, Russia announced that she would abstain for the future from taking any active part in Korean affairs.
3. Reference to the Czar's tour which he made as Czarevitch in 1891. He visited China and Japan in April and May of that year.
4. Russian warships sent to reenforce the Russian Pacific squadron.

XV

Berlin 30/v 98
Private & *very confidential*

Dearest Nicky

With a suddenness wholly unexpected to me am I placed before a grave decision which is of vital importance to my country, and which is so far reaching that I cannot foresee the ultimate consequences. The traditions in which I was reared by my beloved Grandfather of blessed memory as regards our two houses and countries, have as you will own allways been kept up by me as a holy bequest from him, and my loyalty to you and your family is, I flatter myself, above any suspicion. I therefore come to you as my friend and "confident" to lay the affairs before you as one who expects a frank and loyal answer to a frank and loyal question.

In the beginning of April the attacks on my country and person, till then showered on us by the British Press and people, suddenly fell off, and there was, as you will have perceived a momentary lull. This rather astonished us at home and we were at loss for an explanation. In a private inquiry I found out that H. M. the Queen herself through a friend

of hers had sent word to the British Papers, that she wished this unnoble and false game to cease. This in the Land of the "Free Press"! Such an unwonted step naturally led us to the conclusion that something was in the air. About Easter a Celebrated Politician[1] *propriomotu* suddenly sent for my Ambassador and *à brûle pour point*[2] offered him a treaty of Alliance with England![3] Count Hatzfeld[4] utterly astonished said he could not quite make out how that could be after all that had passed between us since '95? The answer was that the offer was made in real earnest and was sincerely ment. My Ambassador said he would report, but that he doubted very much wether Parliament would ever ratify such a treaty, England till now allways having made clear to anybody who wished to hear it, that it never by any means would make an Alliance with any Continental Power whoever it may be! Because it wished to keep its liberty of action. In 1897 (Jubilee Year) this Principle was even put into verse, saying that England needed no Allies, that *le cas échèant* it could fight the whole world alone, with the refrain: "We've got the ships, we've got the men, we've got the money too"!—The Answer was that the prospect had completely changed and that this offer was the consequence. After Easter the request was *urgently* renewed but by my commands cooly and dilatorily answered in a colourless manner. I thought the affair had ended. Now however the Request has been renewed for

the third time in such an unmistakable manner putting a *certain short term* to my definite answer and accompanied by such enormous offers showing a wide and great future opening for my country that I think it my duty to Germany duly to reflect before I answer. Now before I do it I frankly and openly come to you my esteemed friend and cousin to inform you, as I feel that it is a question so to say of life and death. We two have the same opinions, we want peace, and we have sustained and upheld it till now! What the tendence of the Alliance is, you will well understand, as I am informed that the Alliance is to be with the Triple Alliance and with the addition of Japan and America with whom pourparlers have allready been opened! What the chances are for us in refusing or accepting you may calculate yourself! Now as my old and trusted friend I beg you to tell me what you can offer me and will do if I refuse? Before I take my final decision and send my answer, in this difficult position I must be able to see clearly, and clear and open without any backthoughts must your proposal be, so that I can judge and weigh in my mind and before God, as I should, what is for the good of the Peace of my fatherland and of the world. You need not fear for your Ally in any Proposal you make should she be placed in a combination wished by you. With this letter dearest Nicky I place my whole faith in your silence and discretion to *everybody,* and write as in old times my Grandfather would have written

to your Grandfather Nicholas I![5] May God help you to find the right solution and decision! It is for the next generation! But time is pressing so please answer soon!

Your devoted friend
Willy

P.S. Should you like to meet me anywhere to arrange by mouth I am ready every moment at sea or on land to meet!

NOTES

1. Almost certainly Joseph Chamberlain, who more than once indicated his leaning toward a closer understanding between the British Empire and Germany. There were rumors in Europe in 1898 of a German-British agreement. The idea was at the time by no means popular in Germany. In November, 1899, a year after this letter was written, Mr. Chamberlain in his famous Leicester speech openly expressed his desire for an alliance with the United States and Germany. He said: "We should not remain permanently isolated from the continent of Europe and I think this, that the moment that aspiration was formed it must have appeared evident to everybody that the natural alliance was between ourselves and the great German Empire."
2. Without ado.
3. According to Freiherr von Eckardstein, Counsellor of the German Embassy in London in 1896, steps to such an alliance were first taken by Lord Salisbury, who made a proposal to the Kaiser when the latter was attending the Cowes regatta on August 5th, 1895. According to Eckardstein, Lord Salisbury proposed that Turkey be divided between England, Germany and Austria. The Kaiser spurned the offer.

4. Count von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg, German ambassador in London, from 1885 until his death in 1901.
5. The Kaiser made a mistake. Nicholas I. was the great-grandfather of Nicholas II. The reference is to Alexander II., who was an enthusiastic Germanophil.

XVI

Dearest Nicky

WILHELMSHÖHE 18/VIII 98

Your kind permission allowing me to send dear old Werder to Moskau as my "representant" for the ceremony of the unveiling of your dear Grandfathers[1] statue gives me the opportunity to send you these lines through him. It is really an affair of sentiment which prompted me to send him and not a mere form of courtessy. Through Grandpapa I had often heard of Alexander II and when I had the honour to be presented to him I soon fell under his "charme" as happened to everybody who was honoured by his presence. To his kindness I am indebted that I wear the uniform of the splendid Grenadier Regiment, whose day it is to day, and which is a firm bond uniting me with your fine army, which I shall value and cherish to my dying day.

Your diplomacy has just scored another great success in China,[2] to which I take the liberty of congratulating you the more so as it was done without the firing of a single shot and without any unnecessary noise or bluster. The effect will be a great impetus given to your trade and the industrial estab-

lishments of your country. Henry has just telegraphed to me how kindly your authorities have received him, and are doing everything in their power to make his stay as agreeable as possible for him, which gives me the gratifying opportunity to thank you most heartily! I am most astonished at the amount of bosh and blarney that is beeing ventilated in the newspapers of Europe about my visit to Jerusalem! It is most discouraging to note that the sentiment of real faith, which propels a Christian to seek the Country in which our Saviour lived and suffered, is nearly quite extinct in the so called better classes of the XIXth Century, so that they must explain the Pilgrimage forcibly by Political motives. What is right for thousands even of your lowest peasants is right for me too! Since I communicated to you this June, England has still now and then reopened negotiations with us but has never quite uncovered its hand; they are trying hard, as far as I can make out, to find a continental army to fight for their interests! But I fancy they wont easily find one, at least not *mine!* Their newest move is the wish to gain France over from you, and they in consequence have suddenly decided to send the Duke of Connaught to the French Army Maneuvres a nice little plan of Courcelles,[3] I think, who is ardently at work between Paris and London. I allready once warned your people of him! Now good bye dearest Nicky, how I envy, Werder seeing you and talking with you! Best love to Alix. Are you going

to reintroduce the former uniforms again and buttons? —Believe me

Ever
Your most aff-ate friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. Alexander II., the emancipator of the serfs.
2. Germany and Great Britain having acquired interests in the Far East, Russia saw her terminals of the new Siberian railway menaced. On March 8th, 1898, Russia made peremptory demand for the cession of Port Arthur and Talienwan. Control of the Gulf of Pechili was virtually given Russia by the concessions.
3. Baron de Courcel, French ambassador in London, 1894 to 1898.

XVII

Yacht Loreley Stamboul 20/x 98.

Dearest Nicky

During my stay at Stamboul I gave audiences to the Ambassadors. I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Mr. Sinoview.[1] I found in him a most accomplished diplomatist, a man with a very clear head. An energetic character, in all what one calls a powerful man. I congratulate you on such an excellent choice. We had a long conversation and of course his opinion about Oriental Matters was of the greatest value to me, it was a pleasure to listen to him. His going to see you gives me an opportunity to send these lines through him. The conversation also turned on Cretan matters and on the latest events that happened there. The source from which the latest excesses spring, was doubtless not a clear one, and surely not the usual so called "mussulman fanaticism" generally talked of in the European press. I venture to suppose that intrigues of a certain meddlesome Power[2] have had something to do with them. In the course of our conversation Sinoview openly told me that the situation was far from reassuring, and that the only pos-

sibility for getting out of the "impasse" was to make the Turks leave Crete bag and baggage! Wether that *must* be so I of course do not know, but as I had the opportunity of pointing out to you at Peterhof,[3] the question of Crete must be solved in a manner, that no general imbroglio comes from it which those scoundrels of Cretans are not worth. I have talked with many old and prominent Turks who have all asured me that the whole *People* had made Crete a question of *National honour!* That an evacuation pure and simple if acceded to by the Sultan would cost him authority, Crown, even perhaps his life, and that they were all deeply concerned and afflicted. I therefore venture to make this known to you with hopes that in your wisdom you will kindly be able to find a solution, which is apt to save the Sultan's position vis à vis of his army and as Kalif vis à vis of the whole Mahometan world. You know by Osten Sackens reports which motives made me "lay down my fleet on the table."[4] Because I felt and saw that a certain Power was using us all others as catspaw to get us to help her to take Crete or Suda bay, and I would not be of the party who are expected to appear with bread and salt and on the top the keys[5] of Crete praying the said Power to kindly look after the wellfare of those poor darling "Cretans! who may one and all rost in hell"! The recent events have shown me that my suspicions were right and that this certain Power means mischief and to use force. That is: they want to expel

the Mussulmen, who are *born and Natives of Crete like the Christian insurgents,* only converted of Islamism, who are the landed proprietors, after these have lost everything they have, and give the property to the Christians who were till now their own paid tenants and their labourers and who revolted against their masters. That is the Cretan question in a nutshell! and that is what I call downright robbery! What an effect this act of pillage has had on the Mahometan world you have no idea, but I feel and see and hear it, what a terrible blow to the prestige of the Christian in general in the eyes of the Mussulman and renewal of hatred you can hardly imagine! The Powers concerned in Crete have played a foolish and most dangerous game, and that is what compels me to call your kind attention to the matter! Remember what you and I agreed upon at Peterhof never to forget that the Mahometans were a tremendous card in our game in case you or I were suddenly confronted by a war with the certain meddlesome Power. You as the master of millions of Mahometans must be the best judge of this. If you quietly go on following the lead of the other Power in Crete as has been done till now, the effect will (be) deplorable upon your own Mahometan subjects and on Turky, and you will lose a most precious cè tout out of your play! Therefore I implore you to give this matter once more your most serious attention and if possible find means by which you can save the Sultan from a dan-

gerous and compromising situation envers ses sujets[6] and solve the Cretan question in a manner acceptable to him. Dont forget that his Army fought valiantly and victoriously *for Crete* at Larissa and Domokos[7] and reconquered the Province. It would never forget or forgive another power the expulsion of their brothers in Aras and their Master from a reconquered Province! What a splendid opportunity for you to step in and to save the Sultan from disgrace, the world from bloody war and gain the gratitude of all Mahometans! Otherwise revolution may come, and the Sultan's blood may one day be at your door!

I beg your pardon for intruding like this in your time and repose, but the situation is too serious, the interests at stake are too manifold, and I should not wish to see Russia lose her fine position she still now has retained here; all hoping eyes are turned to the great Emperor of the East, will he bring the hoped for solution? My perhaps rather rough oppeness may show you how great and intense my love for you is. Best love to Alix

Your aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Russian ambassador in Constantinople.
2. Great Britain.

3. August, 1897.
4. In the Cretan question Germany had, in the words of Bülow, "laid down her flute and left the concert room." The German troops were withdrawn from Crete on March 16th.
5. Quays.
6. With regard to his subjects.
7. Greeks defeated at Larisse April 23rd, 1897; at Domoko May 17th, 1897.

XVIII

Damaskus 9/xi 98.

Dearest Nicky

By the kind telegram you sent me to Jerusalem[1] you intimate that you follow our journey with interest; this encourages me to send you a few lines at the end of our tour with some of my impressions. They are so manifold that it is rather difficult to fix them.

In the first place Jerusalem has of course occupied our attention on account of the many places filled with reminiscences of our Saviour. The thought that His eyes rested on the same hills, that His feet trod the same ground is most stirring to ones heart, and makes it beat faster and more fervently. But I must frankly own that not all one sees relating to the Christian faith is exactly adopted for the promotion of this feeling. The manifold and different confessions and sects of our Common Christian faith have done too much in the way of church-building, the erection of monastries, chapels etc. on so called "Traditional Holy Places." Which has led to a sort of concurrence or race for the highest towers or biggest churches, which do not at all harmonise

with the sites they are erected on. In fact one could call it an exhibition of Church-models![2] This has also affected the clergies of the different churches, who have a pleasure in intrigues and political designs fostering hatred instead of love, and leading to free fights and battles in the churches instead of Psalms and friendly intercourse. But what is worse still they have created a worship of stones and wood, foribdden in the 2nd of the X Commandments, instead of the Divinity itself. A Frenchman characteristically said to me: "C'est l'adoration de la Pierre aux lieux 'soit disant Saints,' dont la Sainteté ne peut être garantie, et la *Divinité* n'est pour Rien!"[3] Very true but most distressing to our Christian feeling. Very naturally this—I beg your pardon—Fetish adoration has created a supreme contempt for the Christians with the Moslems. My personal feeling in leaving the Holy City was that I felt profondly ashamed before the Moslems and that if I had come there without any Religion at all I certainly would have turned Mahommetan! The way Religion is understood in Jerusalem, it will never lead to the conversion of a single Moslem, or the growth of a single tree or the digging of a single new well. I am afraid that Religion in Jerusalem is often used by the Clergies as a cover for political devices and designs and that is very wrong and does Christianity a very great harm as the Moslems have long ago perceived this and treat us accordingly. I return home with feelings of great disillusion and

with the firm convictions that our Saviours grave quite certainly *is not beneath* that church of the Saint Sepulchre, which in its appearance and decoration compares very badly with the Mosque of Omar in its simple and awe inspiring grandeur!—Alas!—The most interesting and the finest town from the oriental point of view is no doubt Damascus. Beirut with its lovely villas gardens and glades reminding one more of a town in the south of Italy or in Sicily. The Holy Land is simply terrible in its arid dryness and utter want of trees and water. But here everything is changed as if by magic! The great River Barader[4] gives life and coolness and fosters vegetation of the finest description. The town is situated in the midst of vast gardens and shady glades all watered by small rivulets giving them the aspect—when seen from above—of a large fasanarie of the circumference of 2 square miles! The quiet lovely courtyards with their Arabian Masonry, their shady nooks and murmuring fountains with fresh water in marble basins, are simply unique, like in a dream! You would be delighted to be here as you understand so much about the East!—Our reception[5] here is simply astounding never has a Christian—Giaur—Monarch been so fêted and received with such unbounded enthusiasm. It is because I am a friend of their Sultan and Kaliph and because I allways pursued an open and loyal Policy toward him; the same I so often advocated for you too. The hatred of the English is strong and growing more

and more intense—no wonder—whilst in the same time apace with it grows the open contempt of France, which has lost all the respect it once possessed of old! That is the unavoidable consequence of the terrible quagmire the French are now floundering about in their interior affairs,[6] splashing the dirt right and left till the whole of Europe reeks with the stench! Showing how far the corruption lying and dishounour has allready gained in the nation and before all in the army! Here people look upon them as on a dying nation, especially since the last and most ignominious retreat of the French from Faschoda![7] What on earth has possessed them? After such a first rate well arranged and plucky expedition of poor and brave Marchand? They were in a first rate position and able to help us others all in Africa who are sorely in need of strong help! The news here have come like a thunderbolt on the Eastern People, nobody would believe them! at all events if it is true, what the Papers say, that count Mouravioff[8] councelled France to take this foolish step he was singularily and exceptionally ill advised, as it has given your *"friends and allies"* a mortal blow here and brought down their ancient prestige here never to rise again! The Moslems call it Frances second Sedan, and the poor french Consul I spoke to was in tears saying that all was crumbling to dust around him! France will never forget that piece of friendship nor will she ever feel very grateful for them. These my dear

Nicky are the most interesting of my observations, which I openly and without backthought refer to after having seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears what is going on in this most interesting country. I found all my suppositions and combinations I so often laid before you absolutely confirmed; Turky is very much alive and not a dying man. Beware of the Musulmen if you touch their National honour or their Khalif! Best love to Alix.

Ever your most devoted friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. The Kaiser and Kaiserin entered Jerusalem in the afternoon of October 29th. The ostensible object of the Kaiser's visit was the consecration of the Church of the Redeemer.
2. The Kaiser considered himself an expert in ecclesiastical architecture, and took a prominent part in encouraging the building of churches throughout Germany.
3. It is the worship of stone of so-called holy places of which the holiness cannot be guaranteed and the Divinity of which stands for nothing.
4. The River Barada which runs through Damascus and converts the desert into a fruitful paradise.
5. The Kaiser was welcomed by the Ulema of Damascus, who invoked Heaven's richest blessing on him, and was entertained at a banquet at the municipal hall.
6. The Dreyfuss case was at its height at this time. It had been referred for revision to the Cour de Cassation on September 26th.
7. On July 10th, 1898, Fashoda, an Egyptian military post, was occupied by a small French force coming from the Congo, com-

manded by Major Marchand. The incident created acute tension between France and Great Britain. The French Government was eventually compelled to recall Major Marchand, which was done on November 4th, 1898.

8. Michael Mouravioff was Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1898.

XIX

BERLIN 6/v 1900

Dearest Nicky

In haste I just manage to write these few lines to thank you from the depth of my heart for your kind and dear letter you so kindly sent me through Costia.[1] Indeed I do so well remember the events of your coming of age and the ceremonies which accompanied it! How bravely you spoke your oath and how deeply moved your dear father was when he embraced you afterwards! How time has gone by! Now you too are ruler of a Great Empire and have children, and I have a grown up son! What a very kind idea it was of you to send Costia and dear old Richter[2] as well as the Gentlemen of your suite to be present at the coming of the age of my boy.[3] It makes me thankful and proud that you kindly take such an interest in the events which take place in our house, which is again a proof of the firm bond of friendship which we have inherited from our fathers and which, with Gods Will and help may never cease to exist! The ceremony of his taking the oath[4] on the old colours of the I Rgt. of the Guards was most impressive and very touching, the

boy behaving most naturally and also very bravely before the great assembly of Princes etc. With thousand thanks and kind much love to dear Alix and the wishes for a good summer I remain

Ever your most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

P.S. Our grand maneuvres this year between Guards and II A.[5] Corps are near Stettin;[6] should you care to see some of it you could come with your yacht to Swinemunde and from there I could take you straight up the river to the town.

W.

NOTES

1. Grand Duke Constantine Constantinovitch, the Czar's cousin.
2. General von Richter, chief of the German Imperial Household.
3. The Crown Prince was eighteen years old on May 6th, 1900. His birthday was celebrated with unprecedented ceremony, the Austrian Emperor being present.
4. After the service in the Chapel of the Royal Palace, the Crown Prince repeated the oath of fealty to the colors as recited by General von Plessen, who had placed his own helmet on the Crown Prince's head.
5. Second Army Corps.
6. The maneuvres between the Guard Corps and the Second Army Corps took place in Pomerania during the first two weeks of September, 1900. The Czar did not accept the Kaiser's invitation.

XX

SWINEMÜNDE 8/VI 1901

Dearest Nicky

I send you this lines through my son Adalbert[1] to whom I trust you will kindly extend your grace. It is the first foreign country which he visits, and as he is still only a middy I beg you will not make too much of him officially. He is young and steady and I rely upon you that you will kindly see that he does not get into wrong or bad company.

With best love to Alix and her times I remain, with great pleasure anticipating our meeting on the sea

Ever your most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Prince Adalbert arrived off Petrograd on July 19th in the German training ship "Charlotte." On July 23rd the Czar wearing the German Naval Uniform paid him a visit on board.

XXI

13/VI 1901 KIEL

Dearest Nicky

My best and warmest thanks for your kind messages through Paulis.[1] Everything shall be arranged as you wish. The fleet is to be anchored according to the wind, where the anchorage offers most cover. Boyes marked with Russian flags will be laid for your vessels. Aviso and torpedoboats will meet you and guide you to your berth. Am not going to bring any diplomatist with me; not even the chancellor[2] excepting your wanting to see him.

Waldersee[3] will be there to "melden"[4] himself. Dear old Schouwaloff is in Berlin and the whole garnison is making its pilgrimage to him; in the streets every soldier makes "front" and in passing his window the bands play your Hymn.

With greatest pleasure I look forward to meet you! Weidmannsheil[5] for Alix.

Willy

NOTES

1. Count Pauli, Russian Naval Attaché in Berlin.
2. Count Bülow had succeeded Prince Hohenlohe as Chancellor October 18th, 1900.

3. Field-Marshal Count von Waldersee was then on his way back from China. He had taken command of the Allied forces in China on September 27th, 1900. He left Peking on June 3rd, 1901, and arrived at Hamburg on August 8th. The proposed arrangements for meeting between Czar and Kaiser must refer to the Danzig meeting of September 11th.
4. Report.
5. Sportsman's greeting.

XXII

WILHELMSHÖHE 22/VIII 1901

Dearest Nicky

Your kind letter of the 17th has just reached me this morning and I hasten to thank you for the kind feelings you express in its lines. I am most grateful and highly pleased to see by your letter that I shall really have the great pleasure of meeting you near Dantzig.[1] The more so as I shall do it at the head of my fleet, which will be most eager to salute its Admiral and which hopes that it will be able to earn his satisfaction when he inspects it. For it is well known among the officers and crews of my Navy, that with your interest in and knowledge of naval matters you look upon your position as our Hon. Admiral in real earnest and that you inspect with the eyes of an expert. Consequently they will use every effort to show what they can do. I only beg you not to forget—what you perfectly know through our publications—that my fleet is just in the act of expansion and transformation. This of course is a drawback to its outward appearance, as old material and new and many different types are grouped together, by which the general appearance

of the Fleet shows a lamentable want of harmony and homogenousness.

You have kindly alluded to Adalbert's visit, whom you have awfully spoilt by your grand hospitality: your prise makes Papa and Mama very proud. I hope he will allways be worthy of it. Your sympathy in my bereavement by the death of poor dear Mama[2] has deeply touched me. You are of course able to judge from your own sad experience, when your poor father died, what it means to lose a parent who to all human knowledge might have been spared to live for many long years! Yet in this case the suffering was so terrible, that one could look upon the end as a release, when the Lord called her away, and her last hours were I am thankful to say quite peaceful and painless. Thanks to the great speed of my Yacht and her consorts who took me in 28 hours from Bergen to Kiel, I was able to reach Cronberg in time to find her still conscious. I have communicated your kind invitation to meet him, to the Chancellor,[3] who is deeply honoured, that you show him such confidence, as he was quite unprepared. I myself am very happy, because he is a very good "connoiseur" of Russian affairs and traditions and retains a thankful memory and deep attachment to your family from his stay in Petersburg. Regarding Count Lamsdorf[4] I shall of course receive him should he be on board your Yacht; should that not be the case, and as we are not on shore at all, please do not trouble the poor Minister to make

the long voyage to Dantzig. The heat we suffered from in Norway[5] was appaling, up to 30° Reaumur in the shade! Like in Syria! My suite some 20 men managed to finish off 167 bottles of Apolinaris in *one* day!—May the weather be fine, without the above result when you come; the details of the programme will be forwarded to you by Paulis. Best thanks for the Anna Medal just received, which pretty and gives me great pleasure and best love to Alix from your most devoted and aff-ate

Willy

NOTES

1. The meeting of the Czar and the Kaiser at Danzig took place on September 11th, 1901.
2. The Empress Frederick died at Friedrichsruhe on August 5th, 1901.
3. It was announced in Berlin on August 26th that Count Bülow would be present at the meeting of the two Emperors.
4. The Russian Foreign Minister.
5. The Kaiser had been recalled from Norway by the death of the Empress Frederick.

XXIII

Neues Palais 17/xii 1901

Dearest Nicky

Your own dear brother Micha's[1] visit is coming to an end and with great regret we see him leave. He is a cheering and most engaging young man, who has captivated everybody here, even my daughter! He shot very well and has bravely gone through all the "corvées" of an official dinner with presentations and *cercle,* though greatly relieved that there was no "speechifying." All the people who met him were struck by his clear, open manly countenance and frank expression! He was a success! I am most grateful for the kind words about Dantzig, which make me uncommonly proud. I hope that on my visit next summer I may be able to show a more homogenous squadron and one of the new protected cruisers! I am looking forward to our beeing together with pleasure! Colonel Kasnakof is here with the officers of my Dragoons and seems a remarkably nice officer; I am so glad to have them all here.—I beg you, as a souvenir of my dear Mama, to accept a pin from me and a locket for Alix. Micha will hand them over to you. With

the sincerest wishes for a happy new year and merry Xmas, I remain your loving cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Grand Duke Michael, the Czarevitch, arrived in Berlin on December 15th, where he was received by the Kaiser at the station. The Czarevitch was present at a banquet at Potsdam on December 16th and went pheasant shooting with the Kaiser on the following day.

XXIV

Neues Palais 3/1 1902

Dearest Nicky

These lines are to wish you a merry Xmas and a happy new Year.[1] May God bless and protect you and wife and children and keep you all sound in body and soul. May your work for the Peace of the world[2] be successful and well as the plans you are maturing for the wellfare of your country.

I send you as Xmas present an officers dirk[3] corresponding to the model I introduced into our navy by order dated from the "Variag"; which I beg you to accept as a souvenir of the kind visit you paid me off Danzig and of the merry hours we spent together.

This new sidearm is so popular among our officers that I believe they even go to bed with it.

My fleet Henry and I are allready looking forward to the day we shall be able to repay your visit[4] this year, and I shall be most glad to know when you expect us and where?

As you take such interest in our navy, it will interest you to hear, that the new armoured cruiser "Prince Henry" is rapidly nearing completion and

has allready tried her engines on the spot with most satisfactory results. She is expected to join the fleet after her trials end of the winter. The new Line of Battleship, "Charlemagne" the 5th of the "Kaiser Class" will it is hoped be ready for her trials at sea end of next week, and Henry hopes he will join him in a month.

The "Wittelsbach" Class is beeing pushed forward with all speed and it is hoped will be able to join Henry's Flag after the maneuvres. This means an addition of 5 Line of Battleships, which will enable him to dispose of a fully homogenous fleet of "Peacemakers" which no doubt will make themselves most agreeably felt and useful in helping you to keep the world quiet. The 5 new Line of Battleships have all been contracted for and have been begun, they constitute the first Division of the second Squadron.

By the bye I see by the papers that the "historical" "Variag" has arrived at "Koweit".[5] That is a very wise thing that your flag is shown there. For it does not seem impossible that another Power[6] was in the act of repeating the very successful experiment it made on the Nile, to haul down the Sultans flag, land some men and guns, hoist some flag or other under a pretext and then say: "J'y suis, j'y reste"! In this case it would have ment paramount rule of all the trade routes of Persia leading to the Gulf, by this of Persia itself and by that "Ta-Ta" to your proposed establishment of Russian Com-

merce, which is very ably begun by the conclusion of the "'Zollverein" with Persia[7] by you. The behaviour of the Foreign Power at "Koweit" sets into a strong relief, the enormous advantage of an overwhelming fleet which rules the approaches from the sea to places that have no means of communication over land, but which we others cannot approach because our fleets are too weak and without them our transports at the mercy of the enemy. This shows once more how very necessary the Bagdad Railway[8] is which I intend German Capital to build. If that most excellent Sultan had not been dawdling for years with this question the Line might have been begun years ago and would now have offered you the opportunity of despatching a few Regiments from Odessa straight down to "Koweit" and then that would have turned the tables on the other Power by reason of the Russian Troops having the command of the inner Lines on shore against which even the greatest fleet is powerless for many reasons. The *main one*—according to an adaptation of the Commander of Cronstadts answer to Peter the Great for not saluting him—"D'abord, parceque les vaisseaux ne peuvent pas marche sur terre",[9] whereas you may say "celá suffit"! The original answer of the gallant Admiral: "D'abord parceque je n'ai plus de poudre"[10] was vouchsafed the day before St. Nicholas to Henry by the Captain of the "Askold". My squadron has received orders to feast your namesday, by a rich display of bunting and of a

Royal salute. But when Henry enquired from the Captain v. Reitzenstein at what a clock the ceremony was to take place, the latter declared he would do nothing of the sort, and even after Serge had sent word to him, flatly refused to hoist his pennant and to salute his Emperor, notwithstanding, that she is in commission and has her whole crew on board. My Squadron was deeply disappointed and much—if I may venture to say so—disgusted at the behaviour of this man! I am sending you beside the dirk a most interesting book about the South African war, written by an Englishman, who wholly condemns the way it was entered into and the ends for which it was begun. It is very lucid to the point and shows that the Author maintains his impartiality to the last moment; a most gratifying exception to the rule now at work in England. The parallel he draws between this war and the war against American Colonies, 1775-83, is most surprising and striking. The bearer of my gifts is my Aide-de-Camp, Captain von Usedom[11]—years ago for a time Henry's adjutant—he was in Command of the "Hertha" during the China affair, and it is he who saved the Seymour Expedition and brought it safe back to Tientsin. He was in fact the Admiral's Chief of the Staff and to him was given the now "historical" order of which my "bluejackets" are so proud "Germans to the Front", when the British Sailors refused to go on any farther. He was not present at Danzig, having injured his leg by a fall from his horse,

so I thought you would like to hear from his own lips the record of what men composing that ill-starred expedition suffered. Now dearest Nicky, Goodbye, best love to Alix, Micha and your Mama from

Ever Your
most aff-ate and devoted Cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. The Russian New Year was thirteen days later, according to the old style.
2. The Czar proposed a conference of the Powers for the preservation of peace by disarmament on August 24th, 1898. A second proposal was issued in January 1899, and the first Hague conference sat from May to August of that year.
3. The Kaiser and the Czar were on the Russian cruiser "Variag" on September 30th, attending the German naval maneuvres, when the German Emperor issued an order directing that all German naval officers, following the example of the Russian officers, should wear the dirk of a naval ensign.
4. The Kaiser and Czar met at Reval, August 6-8, 1902.
5. It was announced on December 20th, 1901, that the Sultan had sent for the Sheik Mabarouk of Koweit, to come to Constantinople. Mabarouk appealed to Great Britain for protection. A Bombay telegram of that date stated that a Russian cruiser "Variag" had just arrived in dock, where her four funnels and six searchlights had greatly impressed the natives. The situation was complicated by a report that a Turkish flag, which had been hoisted over Mabarouk's residence, had been hauled down by the commander of a British gunboat, who had it replaced by Marabouk's own flag in token of the Sheik's independence.
6. Obviously Great Britain.

7. A financial agreement was concluded between Russia and Persia on January 30th, 1900. The Russo-Persian commercial agreement was not ratified by the Czar until February 14th, 1903.
8. The Baghdad Railway Concession was granted to a German syndicate at the end of November, 1899.
9. First, because ships do not proceed on land.
10. First, because I have no more powder.
11. He was in command of the German troops which accompanied Admiral Seymour in his attempt to relieve Peking in June, 1900. In the published official diary of the Captain, the following entry was made: "June 22nd, 1900. At 1 a. m. we continued our march, Seymour ordering 'Germans to the front,' but were delayed by junks running aground. . . . The Germans had to go to the support of the English marines, who were hard pressed." Admiral Seymour, in a letter to the "London Morning Post" of January 10th, 1920, gave his version of the "Germans to the front" order. The Admiral writes: "Owing perhaps to the ex-Kaiser's occasional uncertain memory, the statement about the Germans is not correct. I do not believe I ever gave the order stated, but if so it was only as a tactical arrangement for the moment of one day. Our own men were the most numerous body, and therefore took the chief part throughout; while the other seven nationalities all behaved well. Captain von Usedom was a fine officer and loyal to me, but I only made him Chief of my Staff after Captain Jellicoe (now Admiral of the fleet) had been severely wounded and because the Germans were next in numbers below ours."

XXV

BERLIN 30/1 1902

Dearest Nicky

Let me once more thank you by letter for your kind thought of sending your favorite Aide de Camp Obolenski with the presents for my birthday. The "pelerine" is most practical and will do good service in all weathers, notabene in going in a launch to and from the "Standart" to the "Hohenzollern" at Reval! Then the vases are quite charming; the blue one with "pâte sur pâte" is an exquisite specimen and a most handsome decoration in my salons. Obolenski accompanied me all through the different functions of my birthday and will be able to tell you what a poor, overworked "Landesvater"[1] has to go through before he is able to sit down quietly for a morsel of food and a cigarette!! However we managed to be very jolly as all my "Geschwister"[2] were here and Henry managed to keep the family alive, elated as he is with the prospect of paying the Americans and their fair ladies a flying visit,[3] which to our great amusement seems to create considerable "toothache" in the shores on the side of the Channel!

But I must not take up your precious time any longer; Obolenski[4] brings you the tables of the Russian, American, and Japanese Navies drawn up according to the latest reports, and photographs from Danzig, upon which I allways look back with thanks and pleasure as your most dutiful and affate cousin and friend

Willy

Best love to Alix.

NOTES

1. Father of his country.
2. Brothers and sisters.
3. Prince Henry arrived in the United States on February 23rd, 1902.
4. Prince Vladimir Nicholaievitch Obolensky, Colonel of the Preobrajensky Guard Regiment.

XXVI

Generalcommando Posen 2/ix 1902

Dearest Nicky

Since my return from Reval I have been very buisy, as you will have seen by the papers. Now that my illustrious guest the King[1] has left after a successful visit I am able in the "trouble" of maneuvres to spare a few minutes, which will consecrate to these lines I send you. For needless to say so, the souvenir of Reval is still vivid before my eyes; with it the kindness and friendship you showed me, the fine military display, the efficiency of your fleet at target practice and at evolutions and last not least the many hours of amiable and undisturbed companionship with friendly intercourse I was allowed to spend with you, all that is still forward in my thoughts and still fully occupies my suites and my mind that I feel it would be a decided want of tact and education if I did not once more thank through this letter from all my heart. The whole stay was a continuous treat for me; but it was more. The school of Naval gunnery which was shown to me by your orders is the most vital part of the development of the Navy and of its preparation for "busi-

ness." Through this permission you showed me a special mark of confidence—in fact a reciprocity for what I showed you at Danzig—which implies a complete trust in the visitor, only possible between men having the same ideas and principles, and which between two Monarchs means united work in the common cause of preserving the peace for their countries. This trust and faith you have shown me is, —I can assure you—not misplaced, for I fully reciprocate it. That is shown by the fact that the secret plans for my newest ships—invisible to the foreigner—were handed over to you and to the discretion of your Naval authorities. To these facts add that we both have the same interest in the development of our Navies, that the passion for the sea is inborn to us, that will suffice to show that we must look at our two navies as *one* great organization belonging to *one* great Continent whose interest it must safeguard on its shores and in distant seas. This means practically the Peace of the World.

For as the Rulers of the two leading Powers of the two great Continental Combinations we are able to exchange our views on any general question touching their interests, and as soon as we have settled how to takle it, we are able to bring our Allies to adopt the same views, so that the two Alliances—i.e. 5 Powers—having decided that Peace is to be kept, the World must remain at peace, and will be able to enjoy its blessings. This is a vivid illustra-

tion of the fact that the two Alliances hold the balance of Europe and of the World in keeping in close communication with each other by the annual meeting of their two leaders to exchange their views.

This is the more necessary as certain symptoms in the East seems to show that Japan is becoming a rather restless customer and that the situation necessitates all coolness and decision of the Peace Powers. The news of the attachment of the Japanese General Yamai[2]—former leader of the Jap. troops in China—to the Legation at Peking in order to take in hand the reorganisation of the Chinese Army—i.e. for the unavowed object of driving every other foreigner out of China—is very serious. 20 to 30 Million of trained Chinese helped by half a dozen Jap. Divisions and led by fine, undaunted Christian hating Jap. Officers, is a future to be contemplated not without anxiety; and not impossible. In fact it is the coming into reality of the "Yellow Peril" which I depicted some years ago, and for which engraving I was laughed at by the greater mass of the People.

As it is interesting to see how the distribution of Naval Power would be in case complications should arise in the East I have made a rough and approximate calculation, which has taken the form of a table, which I submit to you. The numbers are not accurate as the ships are constantly changing, but are more to serve as a general clue. The vessels

nearing completion are counted as available, and the oldest ones as well as smaller ones are omitted.

The review went off very well and the V Corps was as good as when you saw it near Görlitz. Everybody was glad to welcome your officers and the Governor General Tschertkoff.[3] I am most grateful you allowed them to come and am quite charmed with the whole bearing of the fine old soldier, who has shown himself exactly as you described him to me. I have given him the Black Eagle to show how I appreciate his visit. He as well as all your officers—who made an excellent impression on me—were deeply afflicted and of course we all too including my wife, at the mishap of Alix; God grant she may soon recover, and that she may feel no ill effects. With Victoria's and my best love to you both I remain your most devoted friend and cousin

Willy
Ad. of Atlantic

NOTES

1. The King of Italy, in Germany August 27-31, 1902.
2. Major-General Yamai was Military Attaché at the Japanese Legation in Peking in 1902-1903.
3. The Governor-General of Warsaw.

XXVII

Berlin 14/1 1903

Dearest Nicky

These lines will be presented to you by my boy. My sisters generally call him "Billy No. 2" or "Little Willy"[1] to discern him from his father. I place him under your kind protection and hope you will be satisfied with his manners; he is still very young and only beginning to form himself, so that should he make any "bèvues" you will kindly overlook them. Besides these lines he is the bearer of a number of Xmas presents for you which I was unable to send earlier. 1/ a large Model of our new (H) class of battleships,[2] which you said at Reval would please you to accept. Schimmelmann is able at any moment to explain it to you. 2/ a watercoulour representing a history of the forms and coulourings of our regimental coulours and Standards since the time of the Great Elector down to my time. The first half is from the Elector to 1806, the second 1900.

3/The whole of the uniforms, arms, cuirasse and accoutrements belonging to your new Cuirassier Regi-

ment,[3] which I hope will fit you. They are in charge of my old Kammerdiener you saw at Reval, "Father" Schultz. He is to instruct your "man" how to put on the different things.

4/ Some brochures and Magazines which I thought might perhaps interest you in your hours of leisure.

With respect to the coulours of our army I have a request to make to you. On the first (Electoral Table) there are the first coulours which belonged to the Regiment of Guards of the First King given after his coronation as Frederick I. Blue with gold flames, crowns and eagles, and white with black Eagle and gold crowns. These colours have been kept in our Arsenal until in the 7 Years War they were carried off from there by the Russian troops that occupied Berlin, with many other things out of the Arsenal. We are now with great care and difficulty rewriting the history of our colours and I would be so thankful if you kindly would allow them to be copied in aquarell or oil so that we may be able to have an authentic likeness of them as they are in Petersburg. Trusting that all will come off well and enveying my boy the pleasure of seeing you

I remain
Ever your most aff-ate friend and cousin
"Billy" No. 1

NOTES

1. The Kaiser was generally called by his brothers and sisters "big brother." The Crown Prince arrived in Petrograd on January 16th, and left on January 24th, 1903.
2. The "Braunschweig." It carried four 11-inch guns, displaced 12,997 tons and had a speed of 18 knots.
3. The "Nicholas II. Emperor of Russia" 8th Regiment of Cuirassiers of the Guard.

XXVIII

NEUES PALAIS 19/IX 1903

Dearest Nicky

It is impossible for me to pass over the sudden and tragic death of that sweet little sunshine,[1] without sending you just a word to tell you, how deeply I feel for you all in this sad affair. It is really very difficult to realise the fact; that this darling child is no more among us! How joyous and merry she was that day at Wolfsgarten[2] when I was there, so full of life and fun and health, and to think that one shall never see her again in this world! What a terrible heartrending blow for poor Ernie,[3] who doated and adored that little enchantress! May heaven give him power to bear up under such a blow! I am still under the charm of the 2 days I was able to spend with you and they remain a delightful souvenir for me. You remember our conversation about the Balkans and Turkey, and my later telegram with my instructions to my Ambassador to give the Sultan an energetic lecture that it was hightime for him to at least conform himself to the "Mürzsteg Programme"[4]? Well these instructions have led to a conversation between my Am-

bassador[5] and the Sultan a few days ago, which took an hour and three quarters. The Sultan was very tough; and decidedly in the idea, that a refusal to comply with the wishes of Russo-Austria backed by me, would bring no great harm to him! The Ambassador had to make use of every power of expression feasible for him versus a Monarch, to bring the gravity of the situation home to His Majesty, and left him "a sadder but a wiser man" after he had made it quite clear to him that on no account whatever would I raise a hand in his support or speak a word for him, should he involve himself and his country into serious consequences, by refusing to fullfill the wishes of H. M. the Russian and the Austrian Emperors, who had shown almost angelic patience and forbearance with his bearing, and who strictly adhered to the February[6] and Mürsteg Programm backed up by me. The Ambassador is under the impression that very animated intrigues are going on in the Palace among a band of organs of very shady nature who surround the Sultan and with incredible lies managed to abuse of his credulity and to keep away the Grand Vizier, whose influence is feared by them, and who is perfectly in harmony and loyally "d'accord" with our 3 ambassadors.

Another interesting piece of news reached me from Sofia. The Prime Minister[7] of the "Archplotter"[8] in a conversation after dinner, gave utterance of his and the country's extreme dissatisfaction at the Mürzsteg Programme! That it was not

enough for them, and that they must insist on getting more. But as he was quite sure that the Imperial Powers would not grant more, they all in Bulgaria turned to Italy, England and France! From these countries alone hope was forthcoming for the future of Bulgaria and Macedonia; alone they would bring "freedom"—i.e. Parliaments and Republics—for the suppressed Balkan Races! This shows you again, what I hinted at in our conversation, that the "Crimean Combination" is forming and working against Russian interests in the East. "The democratic countries governed by parliamentary majorities, against the Imperial Monarchies." History allways will repeat itself.

With best love to Alix and hopes for her speedy recovery I remain ever

Your true and devoted friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. Princess Elisabeth of Hesse, only daughter of Ernest Louis Grand Duke of Hesse by his first marriage with Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. The marriage was dissolved in 1901. The Princess, who was only eight years old, was staying with the Czar's children. There was a story current in Russia that she was poisoned. It is said that one day at dinner the Czar served with a plate of soup passed it with some smiling remark about "ladies first" to the little princess, who died the same night. It was officially announced that the child had died of abdominal typhus.

2. Near Darmstadt, where the Czar and Kaiser met on November 4 and 5, 1903, a fortnight before this letter was written.
3. The Grand Duke of Hesse.
4. The program of Macedonian reforms drawn up by Count Lamsdorf, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Count Goluchowsky, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, at their meeting in Mürtzeg, October 9th, 1903.
5. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein.
6. The preliminary Austro-Russian reform program was presented to the Porte on February 21st, 1903.
7. Major-General R. Petrow, the Bulgarian Prime Minister.
8. Ferdinand of Bulgaria, formerly Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, recognized by the Powers as Czar of Bulgaria in 1909.

XXIX

Neues Palais 4/xii 1903

Dearest Nicky

Enclosed I send you some interesting material for your amusement. Articles about politics, about naval matters, a description of floods in Petersburg—which I do not know whether it is right—and an illustrated magazine about the last maneuvres. Perhaps you will find topics which will remind you of our last conversation, and show how the development of events is looked upon in Europe, perhaps sometimes different from the aspect at Petersburg. If they are old news I beg your pardon, but as you said at Wolfsgarten, it did not matter, provided it were news relating to the interests common to the surety of our 2 nations I venture to submit them to you; they come from cuttings from quite different sources and papers. How glad I am that Alix is all right again and free from that abominable pain! The shooting results are very fine and I wish you "Weidmannsheil" with all my heart. I sent Gen. Adjut. v. Loewenfeld[1] to London to give the long service cross (25 years) to Uncle Arthure[2] and in the same

time to reconnoitre the frame of mind and the flow of public opinion about the Eastern Question. His mother is an English Lady, so he speaks it very well. What he saw or heard I shall let you know.

The Officers in Command of my troops in China have been for a long time allready ordered closely to survey the intercourse between Japs and Chinese Military and the growing influence of Japan with the Chinese Army. 2 days ago I got a report that the Japs are clandestinely arming the Chinese behind your and my backs against us. That they have concluded a secret engagement with China to provide the Army with 20000 new repeating Rifles and ammunition, 48 field guns, and 12 Mountain guns (rapid firing) with ammunition to be there till next summer. The Chinese troops are drilling day and night, as the people who watched them for instance at Pao-tins-fu say, remarkably well! Commanded by Jap. instructing officers, whose numbers are steadily increasing! Nice business! I believe the Chinese might not to be allowed to have Japs in their Army! They are sure to rouse Chinese hopes and inflame their hatred against the White Race in general and constitute a grave danger to your rear in case you would have to face a Jap adventure on the Seashore. Begging your pardon for my liberty I have taken I hope the Admiral of the Pacific will not be angry with the Admiral of the Atlantic's sig-

nals, who is allways on the lookout! Ta, ta, best love to Alix

From your devoted friend and cousin toujours en vedette

Willy

NOTES

1. General Alfred von Loewenfeld was General a la suite from 1901 to 1904
2. The Duke of Connaught. There is no record of the Long Service Cross having been conferred on the Duke. He was appointed Prussian Field Marshal in 1906.

XXX

BERLIN 3/1 1904

Dearest Nicky

These lines are meant to reach you on your Xmas Eve and will I hope find you well and happy with Alix well again at your side and the merry little company[1] romping around you in the glimmer of the light of the Xmas tree. I once more wish you every blessing of Heaven on all your ways, may your precious life be spared to us all as well as of all those dear to you. May your plans meet with full success: if in peaceful ways, softly as a rippling brook; if by the decision of the arms, may they be victorious and your Standards wave enwreathed with fresh laurels.

Many thanks for your kind letter from December 20th which is a new testimonial of your confidence so precious to me. We only shall have to be careful lest the scheme,[2] so auspiciously started, should get wrecked on some question of detail. When I parted from your dear old Grandfather the King I was under the impression that the subject occupied his mind, and that he was meditating, in order to find the form best suited to the requirements of his country. As base for our conversation, I used some

Danish Newspaper Articles about Danish neutrality. As their comments appear to have attrackted a good deal of attention in Denmark, I enclose a short extract of them, which may serve as help to show you the nature of the difficulties that the king seemed to foresee and to apprehend from his people at home. Hence it becomes evident that the King, as the party most concerned in the issue of the question, is doubtless first of all entitled to an expression of his views, and to have them worded and drawn up by somebody possessing his absolute confidence. It therefore struck me as the next step to be taken in this matter would be the best, if you were to write to your grandfather to submit the proposals to us as soon as they have attained a form acceptable to him; and that we look forward to his giving us the full scope of his ideas concerning the question of the Danish neutrality. Considering the bygone days of '64 it is clear that the Danes still look a little askance at us and therefore they will view a proposal relating to their destiny with more favour if it comes from you; who are so nearly related to their King and who are the son of a Princess passionately adored by them. I send you enclosed some interesting articles. One about our Navy and Russia's Policy from the 19th Century; one about your Commercial Fleet. 2 English Paper cuttings from a penny Newspaper[3] which is daily read by thousands in the streets of London and elsewhere in England. It is to show you with what stuff and in what a tone

this Press is feeding its readers for many weeks allready, and how they are blowing at the flames were they can. To us here on the Continent this hypocrisy and hatred is utterly odious and incomprehensible! Everybody here understands perfectly that Russia following the laws of expansion must try to get at the Sea for an iceless outlet for its commerce. By this law it is entitled to a strip of coast where such harbours are situated (Wladiw.,[4] Port Arthur) their "Hinterland" must be in your power so as to allow your building the Railways which are to carry the goods to the ports (Mandschuria) Between the two ports is a tongue of land which may—in one adversaries hand—become a new sort of Dardanells. That is impossible for you to allow. These "Dardanells" (Korea) must not threaten your communications thereby hampering your commerce. That is allready on the "Black Sea" and that is not what you want to the Far East for! Therefore it is evident to every unbiassed mind that Korea must and will be Russian. When or how that is nobody's affair and concerns only you and your country. That is the opinion of our People here at home and therefore there is no exitement or "emballement" or war roumors or anything of that sort *here*. The sure end that Korea will once be yours is a foregone conclusion here like the occupation of Mandschuria, hence nobody troubles themselves about it here!

The new years cards will amuse you, they were taken at your arrival at Wiesbaden! a little souvenir

of the happy days. A happy new Year and Weidmannsheil also for "Big game"[5]

from your devoted cousin and friend
Willy

best love to Alix.

NOTES

1. The Czar's four daughters, aged from two to nine.
2. The reference is to the effort to obtain Denmark's adherence to a Russo-German alliance. On December 17th, 1903, King Christian IX. visited Germany. The Kaiser prophesied to him that in the event of a Russo-Japanese war the British fleet would undoubtedly attack the Russian ports of the Baltic and that the German fleet would defend Danish waters, but that Denmark "ought to defend its neutrality" against England. The "dear old grandfather, the King" is the father of Maria Feodorovna, the mother of Nicholas II., who was a Danish Princess.
3. This may refer to "The Morning Post" of December 31st, 1903, which printed the following in its leading editorial: "Japan's whole policy and prospects are threatened by the Russian policy in the Far East, so that Japan is in the position of feeling her national existence challenged. . . . Great Britain is absolutely bound to help Japan in case Russia should find an ally. But the best way to prevent Russia from finding an ally is for Great Britain to make plain at once that she will assist Japan and that she is able and ready to do so."
4. Wladiwostok or Vladivostok.
5. War?

XXXI

Neues Palais 9/1 1904

Dearest Nicky

Only a line to tell you how my thoughts are occupied with you in this serious time. May God grant that everything will come off smoothly, and that the Japs may listen to reason; notwithstanding the frantic efforts of the vile press of a certain country. That also seems to have money left to sink it into the Japanese mobilization abyss. I thank you for the communique you sent me officially through Osten-Sacken. It is very clear and will doubtless lead to a strengthening of Peace. I hope it will appease the feelings of the impertinent war party in Japan as it will surely satisfy the rest of the Powers anxious for their commerce to whom "open door" was once promised.

I send you a copy of "Marine Rundschau" with an article about "Ironclad Cruizers" written by L.[1] This L. is a mask under which I hide myself, for I wrote it, but nobody has a blessed notion except Tirpitz. As material for my article—written in November—I managed to get very interesting details about "Rivadaria" and "Moreno"—now presented

to Japan by England[2]—who were then building for Argentina. These plans which are quite *"confidential"* and were submitted to me by express permission of the President of the Argentine Republic, were sent me by Amaldo. As the ships may interest you, I send you the Atlas, for *your personal* use. I think the ships a perfect type of "Ironclad Cruizer" because they manage to get much into a small tonnage "multum in parvo". They cost 15 Mill. francs each, which is not much. May your men not have to fight against them; it is indeed a great pity you did not buy them. The paper cutting shows you what a certain people call neutrality.

Best wishes for a year of happiness and Peace and in the hopes of meeting you in it and with warmest love to Alix

Ever Yours most aff-ctionally
Willy

P.S. Forgive me if I trouble you so often with telegrams, but at Wolfsgarten, you kindly said that you were thankful for any news worth while which I was able to communicate to you; of course *I rely on your secrecy,* as they are only for you.
Admiral of Atlantic.

NOTES

1. The article appeared in the January, 1904, issue of the "Marine-Rundschau" and is the only one in the files of this maga-

zine bearing the pseudonym of "L." It takes up and answers the question, "What exactly is an armored cruiser?"

2. The "Rivadaria" and the "Moreno" were not presented but sold by England to Japan.

XXXII

BERLIN 11/II 1904

Dearest Nicky

The answer to your kind letter of congratulation for my birthday[1] which made me so happy, was already begun, when the events occurred which led to the war[2] between you and Japan. I thought it better to wait for some sort of communication from you, in case I should be able to answer you. The outbreak of hostilities[3] has had sad consequences for your brave Navy, which have deeply moved me! How could it be otherwise seeing that I am a Russian Admiral and proud of this rank too! Evidently the serious events show that the warning news I could send you through my ciphers were absolutely correct, and that since long the Japanese Government were in bitter ernst and decided to have war. Part of the ships at Port Arthur are known to me by my inspections, and also their officers and crew and my heart is full of sympathy for the poor families stricken by the loss of many numbers. I can well imagine how sore at heart you must feel that all your pains to secure peace were of no avail. But on the other hand this gives you a good conscience and a clear one

too, which allows a man—as I often say—to march to the fray without knapsack or impedimenta. It seems that Heaven—on whose help and will we both rely—has willed that it should be so! Then you must look upon the events in the light of a *Trial* for yourself and your country, which is to enable you and them to show and develop all the great qualities which are dormant in the Russians, which they allready once proved in the great times of the first years of the 19th Century!

It is my wish that—subject to your kind approval—if possible a Prince of my house should accompany your troops as spectator to learn the Art of war. I would choose the Prince Fr. Leopold[4] my brother in law, who is burning to go and speaks Russian. Perhaps you will kindly let me know whether my application can be granted.

You may rest assured that day and night my thought are occupied with you all! I send this letter through Schenk[5]—*your* Colonel—who is to offer you the "Grenadier Cap" which the Alexander Regiment begs you to accept. I pray Heaven may shield and protect you and all your family through coming times. Warmest love to Alix and your mother from

Ever your most devoted friend and cousin
Willy

The news I gave you a month ago concerning the sale of arms to China-Youan-shi-Kai from Japan is

confirmed. I managed to get a copy of the contract signed last October with the firm of Okwa and Comp. in Japan.

1/ 14000 new Jap. Inftry Rifles (Meyji) with cartridge boxes etc. 22 taels each and 7 mill. cartridges to be delivered at Tientsin April next.

2/ 48 (Arisaka) field Guns 7,5 at 5668 yen each.
12 (Arisaka) mountain guns 7,5 cm. 1710 yen each
48 ammunition carts at 8 yen, 5 Forges
200 shell, 200 shrapnel per gun at 10 yen and 8 yen.

The row steel material is being produced in France (Greuzot)—your Ally!—and to be finished in Japan. To be delivered at Tientsin in May next. The Vice Roy of Nanking has ordered from the same firm in September, 1903, 200,000 chests of Ammunition and Knopsacks for 70000 Men.

NOTES

1. The Kaiser was born on January 27th, 1859.
2. Japan had formally declared war the day before this letter was written.
3. On February the 8th, 1904, the Japanese torpedoed three Russian warships lying off Port Arthur.
4. Frederick Leopold, Prince of Prussia, the Kaiser's cousin, married Princess Louise Sophie of Schleswig-Holstein, the Kaiserin's sister. He hoisted the red flag on his palace at Potsdam in November, 1918, when the German revolution broke out.

5. The Kaiser sent a telegram of sympathy to the Czar after the Russian reverse at Port Arthur and through Colonel von Schenck supplemented the telegram by this letter. Von Schenck also brought the Czar from the Kaiser the helmet of the Alexander Regiment of Prussian Grenadier Guards, of which the Czar was the chief.

XXXIII

GAETA 29/III 1904

Dearest Nicky

You will I am sure be interested in the cruise[1] of mine in the Mediterranean. Our voyage on the big Lloyd Steamer "König Albert" was most successfull. We allways had smooth water; even the Bay of Biscay behaved like the lake at Peterhof. When we had some breeze or sea it was direct from the aft. The big ship—she displaced between 15000-16000 Tons, was most comfortable without any motion, no vibration from the engines, was very well kept, and splendidly handled by her first rate Captain. The kitchen was excellent, the company was merry. What a pity you could not be there, how you would have enjoyed it all! The Spanish coast is very fine but without vegetation. Vigo a grand bay with room for all the fleets of the world. British fleets visit there every month; Henry was there last year with our Squadron. The Straits are imposing. But Gibraltar is simply overwhelming! It is the grandest thing I ever saw. Words are utterly inadequate to give the slightest idea of what it is. Grand in its nature by the military Power, that is stored on and around this mighty

Rock. In military circles I found much interest in the war but no preparation for it and no animosity against Russia. Port Mahon is a quiet and the cleanest Spanish town, with a pretty land locked harbour. Something like Malta en miniature. Naples is too lovely and bewitching; summer climate, lots of flowers, carnations especially, orange trees full of oranges! The King was well, and much interested in the war, which he is accurately studying. He mentioned that he had news of the mobilisation of the Turkestan and Caucasian Troops, who were allready moving. I said I thought it most unlikely, and that I had never heard a word about it. I quited him about the Balkans, which always have, it seems, a great attraction for him and said that nothing would happen there, the great Empires beeing resolved not to stand any nonsense from anybody. By the way I see from the papers that our Treaty of Commerce[2] seems to have come to a deadlock. I fancy the Geheim-Räthe and Tschinowniks[3] are gone off to a sweet slumber, after having spoiled a lot of ink, more than is good in fact. I would give anything to see it, what a lark it would be if you suddenly were to thump your Imperial fist on the "Table of green cloth" and give the lazy ones a jump! After all one cannot wait for ever considering the many months that have allready been wasted. A promise of a nice pic-nic in Siberia will I am sure do wonders. Perhaps it would tend to quicken the pace of affairs if you were to send some

person of importance to Berlin straight to Bülow to finish the game off with him personally; a man of first rate capacity and well versed, in such matters; that would do much good.

Tomorrow we leave for Sicily-Messina—where we shall spend Easter week. Good-bye, dearest Nicky, God bless you and be with you through all the important times, you know how my thoughts are now with you. Best love to Alix from Your

affectionate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. The Kaiser left Bremerhaven in the "König Albert" on March 12th. He met the King of Spain at Vigo, and arrived at Gibraltar on March 18th. He was entertained by Sir George White, the Governor, and by Lord Charles Beresford on board his flagship. He is said to have remarked when visiting the signal station on the Rock: "It has quite reached my expectation. It is grand like everything British. I am not surprised at Gibraltar's being impregnable." He reached Naples on March 24th and there boarded the "Hohenzollern." He met the King of Italy on March 26th.
2. The Russo-German Commercial Treaty was signed on July 28th, 1904. This treaty at the time of its conclusion provoked a storm of protests in Russia. Germany had made use of Russia's difficulties in the war against Japan and exacted from the Czar's Government important economic concessions. Russia was compelled to grant practically an open market to German manufacturers and preferential railway terms without any reciprocal benefit.
3. Literally civil servants, but in the popular terminology bureaucrats.

XXXIV

Berlin 6/vi 1904

Dearest Nicky

Your kind letter which Kroupensky delivered to me two days ago has greatly touched me. In these days which are of course trying to you, your army and the country it is doubly kind of you to give up so much time to me, but on the other hand it beeing so, I felt the more proud as I may infer from this fact that you count upon me as your *real friend* as you rightly express it. So it is! And I can assure you that nobody follows all the phases of the war with greater interest and assiduity than I do. Your remark about Kouropatkin[1] was a perfect revelation to me! I am most astonished at his shortsightedness in not implicitly obeying your commands. He ought all the more to have followed your counsels, as you had been to Japan yourself, and therefore were a much more competent judge of the Japs than him. Your warnings were quite right and have been fully borne out by the facts. I only hope to goodness the General wont jeopardise the final success of your Forces by rashly exposing them to an "êchec" before the whole of his reserves have joined

him, which are as I believe still partly on the way. The old proverb of Napoleon I still holds good *"la victoire est avec les gros Bataillons"*; one can never be too strong for the battle; especially respecting the artillery; an absolute superiority must undoubtedly be established to ensure victory.

I had an interesting conversation about the war with the French Milit.-Attache[2] who, on my remarks that I thought it most astonishing that the French as your "Allies" did not send their Fleet down to keep Port Arthur open till your Baltic Fleet had arrived, answered that it was true, but that they had to reckon with other Powers! After many hints and allusions I found out—what I allways feared —that the Anglo-French agreement had the one main effect, viz: to stop the French from helping you! Il va sans dire, that if France had been under the obligation of helping you with her Fleet or Army I would of course not have budged a finger to harm her; for that would have been most illogical on the part of the Author of the Picture "Yellow Peril"!

I am sure England will by times renew her efforts to make proposals to you about mediation—it is in fact the special mission of Harding[3] as I know—, though you have allready so strongly repudiated it, and which is most presuming in the extreme on her part, seeing that the war has only just begun—she is afraid for her money, and wants to get Tibet cheaply—; I shall certainly try to dissuade Uncle

Bertie[4] as soon as I meet him from harrassing you with any more such proposals. Should in the course of events mediation seem advisable to *you,* it is clear that the first wish for it must come from *you;* and you may be sure that I shall also allways be at your disposal! I may compliment you on the bravery and gallantry of your soldiers and sailors who deserve all praise and who have fought very well! I have thought over your suggestion about the Com. Treaty[5] and talked the matter over with the Chancellor. We have no special interest respecting the place where the negociations should be concluded, but as you kindly offer to send Witte over here, we will welcome his arrival, and the sooner you invest him with your powers to negociate the better for our two Countries. I have selected major Count Lambsdorf, my personal aide-de-camp, as Milit.-Attache. He is instructed by me to consider himself as attached to *your person solely* as it was in the days of Nicolai I and Alexander II. He is only responsible in his reports to *me* personally, and is forbidden once for all to communicate with anybody else either the Gen. Staff, or Foreign Office, or Chancellor. So you may entrust him with any message, enquiry, letter etc. for me and make use of him in every respect as a direct link between us two. Should you like to send me one of your suite who enjoys your full confidence, I will receive him with pleasure, for I think it highly necessary during these grave events, that you should be able to quickly com-

municate with me, without the lumbering and indiscreet apparatus of Chancelleries, Embassies etc. I wonder what I am going to hear from Uncle Bertie at Kiel, at all events I shall keep you informed. Now good bye dearest Nicky best love to Alix and your Mama and God protect you all, that is the sincerest wish of

Ever Your
most aff-ate friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. At this time the advance of the Japanese on Port Arthur was reported to have greatly increased the dissension between Admiral Alexeiev and General Kuropatkin. The Admiral insisted that Port Arthur must be saved as a base for the fleet. Kuropatkin, on the other hand, declared that he had not enough men for a forward movement and consequently he must leave Port Arthur to defend itself.
2. The Marquis de Laguiche, Chef d'Escadron d'Artillerie.
3. Count Lamsdorf, the Russian Foreign Minister, gave a banquet in Petrograd on June 2nd in honor of Sir Charles Hardinge (now Viscount Hardinge), the British Ambassador.
4. King Edward of England. The meeting between the King and the Kaiser took place at Kiel on June 26th, 1904.
5. Count Witte arrived at Norderney to confer with Bülow on the Commercial Treaty on July 12th, 1904. The conclusion of the treaty on the 28th constituted a great personal triumph for Count von Bülow.
6. Lambsdorff, the Kaiser's aide-de-camp, not to be confused with the Russian Foreign Minister, Lamsdorf.

XXXV

Schloss Wilhelmschohe 19/viii 1904

Dearest Nicky

What a very kind thought that was of yours to ask me to be Godfather to your little boy! You can well imagine what our joy was when we read your telegram announcing his birth![1] "Was lange wahrt wird gut"[2] says an old German proverb, so may it be with this little dear one! May he grow to be a brave soldier and a wise and powerful statesman; and may Gods blessings allways rest on him and preserve him from all harm of body and soul. May he allways be as a ray of sunshine to you both during your life as he is now in the time of trial! Henry is the bearer of these lines and of my sincerest and heartfelt wishes for you, Alix and the boy! Accompanied by the gift of a Goblet for my little Godchild which he will I hope begin to use when he thinks that a mans thirst cannot for ever be quenched by milk only! Perhaps he may then find out for himself one day that "Ein gut Glas Branntewein, soll Mitternachts nicht shadlich sein"[3] is not only a "truism", but that often "Im Wein ist Wahrheit nur allein"[4] as the butler sings in "Undine",[5] to be

wound up by the classical word of our great Reformer Dr. Martin Luther: "Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib and Gesang, der bleibet ein Narr sein Leben lang".[6] These would be the maxims I would try to see my Godchild educated up to!! There ist great sense in them, and nothing can be said against them!

The course of the war has been most trying to your army and navy and I deeply grieve for the loss of so many brave officers and men who fell or were drowned in doing their duty, loyally fullfilling the oath they swore to their Emperor. May the reinforcements which are being sent out increase the numbers and powers of your army to such a extent that the absolute supremacy may be established also in numbers. As far as I could make out Kouropatkine has 180,000 men in the field, whereas the Japs muster about 250-280,000. This seems a disparity still and makes your valiant General's task a very heavy one. Should your battleships in making their last dash from Port Arthur,[7] not be able to reach Wladiwostok on account of injuries received in the fight, their best chance is to try for Tsingtau, where they will be well looked after till the end of the war, instead of beeing blown up or sunk; just as well as we will take care of "Zesarewitch" and the Torp. boats. May next year bring better luck when the Army prepared and formed in full strength will be able to takle their enemy with better chance as there is for the moment; for it seems to me that Kouropatkine is still in danger of

beeing cut off from his retreat, which he will have to fight for in the direction of Mukden; God grant he may get through unscathed. The old saying of Napoleon I still holds true "la victoire est avec les gros battaillons".

There is no doubt to me that you will and must win in the long run, but it will cost both money and many men; as the enemy is brave and well led and can only be beaten by overwhelming numbers and time and patience. Of course the operations of the field army will be easier and will give better results, as soon as the Baltic fleet[8] will have arrived on the scene, and forced the Jap. Fleet back into their ports, thus restituting the *command of the sea* to you, now lost by the inefficiency of the Admirals in command of the Naval Forces at Port Arthur. The *command of the sea* is an absolutely necessary equivalent to the final success of the land campaign of the army. As it deprives the enemy of his base supports, reinforcements etc, which he can now use freely for the pouring in of reserves, ammunitions, commissariat, evacuation of wounded etc.

When the war broke out in February I worked out a plan of Mobilisation[9] on my own account founded upon the number of Jap. Divisions of 1st line. These being 10-12 Div. it gives *20* Russ Div. absolute supremacy over them, that means *10* army Corps. Of these 4 Siberian Corps may be deducted as beeing on the spot forming the Manchourian

Army, it leaves *6* Corps to be sent from Russia. They would be formed in *2* Armies of *3* Corps each, served by a cavalry corps of *8* brigades with *4* mounted batteries per *Army*. That was what I expected would be sent out and what would be sufficient to win with. Leaving the Manchourian Army as a sort of advance Guard to mask the arrival of the Russian Corps at their base and their formation and dislocation as an Army. I did not venture to write you my ideas as it is not my business to meddle with your affairs, and I was afraid of your telling me to mind my own business, as you know better what Russia requires. But at this moment the first stage of the campaign being practically over I thought it might be of interest to you.

With best love to Alix and the "sunray"[10] I remain Ever Your most devoted

and aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

A. of A.

NOTES

1. The Czarevitch was born on August 12th, 1904, and christened Alexei on August 24th.
2. The good long looked for comes at last.
3. A good glass of brandy will do one no harm at midnight.
4. In wine alone is truth.
5. One of the most charming German fairy-tales by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, 1777-1843.

6. Who loves not women, wine and song remains a fool his whole life long.
7. On the night of August 10th, 1904, a Russian battleship, a cruiser and three destroyers escaped from Port Arthur to Tsin-Tao, by breaking through the Japanese cordon.
8. It sailed in October, 1904.
9. The Kaiser's plan of mobilization was useless in solving Russia's difficulties, which were mainly of transportation. Against the Japanese army of 520,000 men at the outbreak of the war, Russia only had 150,000 troops east of Lake Baikal. Russia's problem was how to carry enough men eastward.
10. Presumably the little Czarevitch.

XXXVI

HUBERTUSHÖHE 10/X 1904

Dearest Nicky

In order not to lose time I at once telegraphed to you after having seen Shebeko.[1] I am much touched by all the kind messages you sent me through him and I see by them that your faith in my loyalty is unshaken. It will indeed simplify matters vastly, now that Alexejew has been recalled.[2] One General who has the absolute command and control of all the troops in Mandschuria will I am sure answer better to all the requirements of the war. Kouropatkine is it seems popular with his troops, and they place full faith in him; that is the point most vital for final success.

Shebeko informed me of your intention to send the Black Sea Fleet out also in conjunction with the Baltic Fleet, and asked me to express my opinion about this plan. I confess that long since I have been expecting this plan to be executed. It is a sound military idea and will ensure victory. As to the best manner of proceeding, I have after ripely maturing the question and after having taken information, come to the following conclusion. The best plan would be to silently and quietly prepare the Fleet

for its destination, not to breath a word about your intention to anybody and any other Power. Then at the moment you think right, calmly and proudly steam through the Dardanells. The Sultan—as we both know for certain—will not offer the shadow of resistance and once you are out, we all shall be vis à vis of a fait accompli, which we all shall quietly accept. I have not the slightest doubt that England will accept it too, though the Press may fume and rage, and their Squadrons steam about a little as they often do in the Mediterranean. But they wont stir in earnest when they see that the rest of the Powers remain quiet. The main point is, that it must happen quite suddenly and unawares and take the whole world by surprise, without letting the secret out beforehand. Here everything shall be kept absolutely mute.

With your approval I shall sign an order appointing Lambsdorff to your suite attached to your person and you will kindly do the same with Shebako.

Ever yours aff-ate

Willy

Best love to Alix

NOTES

1. Colonel Shebeko, Russian Military Attaché in Berlin, since December, 1901, was appointed personal aide-de-camp to the Kaiser by the Czar, in the same way as Count Lambsdorff was the Kaiser's representative attached to the Czar's person.
2. Recalled October 25th, 1904.

XXXVII

Neues Palais 30/x 1904

My dear Nicky

Your kind telegram[1] has given me the pleasure to feel that I was able to be of some use to you in a serious moment. I have at once communicated with the Chancellor and we both have *secretly*—without informing any other person—drawn up the 3 Articles of the Treaty you wished. Be it as you say. Let us stand together. Of course the alliance would be purely defensive, exclusively directed against European agressor or agressors, in the form of a mutual fire insurance company against incendiarism. It is very essential that Amerika should not feel threatened by our agreement. Roosevelt, as I know, owing to the innate American dislike to all coloured races, has no special partiality for Japan, allthough England does her utmost to work upon American feeling in favour of the Japanese. Besides the Americans have a clear perception of the indisputable fact that a powerful Japanese Empire is a lasting danger to the American Philippines. As for France, we both know, that the Radicals and anti-christian parties, which for the moment are the

stronger ones, incline towards England, old Crimean traditions, but are opposed to war, because a victorious General would mean certain destruction to this Republic of miserable civilians. The nationalists or clerical party dislikes England and has sympathies for Russia, but does not dream of throwing in its lot with Russia in the present war. Between these two parties the Republic Government will remain neutral and do nothing, England counts upon this neutrality and upon the consequent isolation of Russia. I positively know that as far back as December last the French Minister of Finance Rouvier[2] from his own accord told the Financial Agent of another Power, that on no account whatever would France join you in a Russo-Japanese war, even if England should take sides with Japan. To make these Republicans doubly sure, England has handed Marocco[3] over to France. The absolute certainty that France intends to remain neutral and even to lend her diplomatic support to *England* is the motive which gives English policy its present unwonted brutal assurance. This unheard of state of things will change for the better as soon as France finds herself face to face with the necessity of choosing sides and openly declaring herself for Petersburg or London. As I said before, the Radicals who gravitate to England abhor war and militarism, whereas the Nationalists while not objecting to war itself, wont fight for England nor against Russia.

Thus it evidently lies in the interest of both parties to bring pressure to bear on and warn England to keep the Peace. If you and I stand shoulder to shoulder, the main result will be that *France must openly and formally join us both* thereby at last fulfilling her treaty obligations towards Russia which are of the highest value to us, especially with respect to her fine harbours and good fleet, which would thereby be at our disposal too. This you may rest assured will put an end to made up grievances about so called breaches of neutrality. This consumation once reached I expect to be able to maintain peace and you will be left a free and undisturbed hand to deal with Japan. May I add that I sincerely admire your masterful political instinct which caused you to refer the North-Sea incidant to the Hague Tribunal.[4] For just this systematically distorted incident has been used by the French Radicals, Clemenceau and all the rest of the tag-rag-and bob-tail as a further argument against the necessity of France's fullfilling her Treaty obligations towards Russia. Of course before we can take any steps in this question and approach France that tiresome North Sea incident must have been brought to a close. For as, I am informed, Declasseé and Cambon have allready adopted the British view of this incident and accordingly *fixed* the *attitude* of the French Government in a *friendly* way for *England.* Should we therefore on *this question* bring pressure

to bear on France, she would no doubt choose the *British* side, just what we dont want her to do. "Il faut que l'incident de la Mer Noire soit close"[5] first, then only after that our action may begin.

I herewith enclose the draft of the Articles of the Treaty as you wished, may it meet with your approval; nobody knows anything about it, not even my foreign Office; the work was done by Bülow and me personally. "Moge Gottes Segen ruhen auf dem Vorhaben der beiden hohen Herrscher, und die Machtige 3 fache Gruppe, Russland, Deutschland. Frankreich für immer Europa den Frieden bewahren helfen, das Walte Gott";[6] those were his words when we had finished.

I send to Suwalki[7] in order to salute you on nearing our frontier. General der Infanterie vd. Goltz and Oberpräsident von Estpreussen von Moltke. The former commands the I Army Corps, after having been chief of our Engineering Corps; which post he filled after his return from Turkey, where he spent many years in the fruitless attempts at reorganisation. The latter is Governor of Eastern Prussia, a nephew of the old Field Marshal, and brother of my Gen. Adjutant, who commanded your Grenadiers and was often kindly received by you, when he came in special mission. With best love to Alix

I remain Ever your aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Undoubtedly the telegram dated October 28th, the text of which follows: "Of course you know the first details of the North Sea incident from our Admiral's telegram. Naturally it completely alters the situation. I have no words to express my indignation with England's conduct. I agree fully with your complaints about England's behaviour concerning the coaling of our ships by German steamers. Whereas she understand the rules of keeping neutrality in her own fashion, it is certainly high time to put a stop to this. The only way, as you say, would be that Germany, Russia and France should at once unite upon arrangements to abolish English and Japanese arrogance and insolence. Would you like to lay down and frame the outlines of such a Treaty? As soon as it is accepted by us France is bound to join her ally."
2. Maurice Rouvier, who was Minister of Finance 1902-1905. He became Premier January 25th, 1905, with M. Declassé as Foreign Minister. He was still Prime Minister when the Moroccan crisis arose, and M. Declassé resigned as a result of German threats.
3. The Anglo-French agreement of April 8th, 1904, contained a clause in which France recognized British predominance in Egypt and Great Britain recognized French influence in Morocco.
4. The Czar's proposal that the dispute arising out of the Dogger Bank incident should be submitted to an international commission of inquiry on the basis of the Hague Convention, was accepted by the British Government on October 28th, 1904.
5. The North Sea incident must be closed.
6. May the blessing of God rest upon the acts of the two high Rulers and may the mighty triple group, Russia, Germany and France forever help maintain peace in Europe; May God bring that about.
7. The Czar left Petrograd on November 8th, 1904, on a tour of military inspection of the western frontier of Russia. General von der Goltz and Herr von Moltke, Chief President of East Prussia, left Berlin for Suwalki on November 9th, and lunched with the Czar at Suwalki on November 10th.

XXXVIII

Draft of Treaty

Leurs Majestés l'Empereur de Toutes les Russies et l'Empereur d'Allemagne afin de localiser autant que faire se peut la Guerre Russo-Japonaise ont arrêté les Articles suivants d'un traité d'Alliance défensive.

ART. I.

Au cas our l'un des deux Empires serait attaqué par une Puissance européenne son Allié l'aidera de Toutes ses forces de terre et de mer. Les deux Alliés, le cas èchéant, feront également cause commune afin se rappeler à la France les obligations qu'elle a assumées aux termes du traité d'Alliance Franco-Russe.

ART. II.

Les deux hautes parties contractantes s'engagent à ne conclure de paix séparée avec aucun adversaire commun.

ART. III.

L'engagement de s'entreaider est valable églaement pur le cas ou des actes accomplis par l'une des

deux hautes parties contractantes pendant la Guerre tels que la livraison de charbon à un belligérant donneraient lieu après la guerre à de réclamations d'une tierce Puissance comme prétendues violations du droit des neutres.

The following is a translation of the Kaiser's original French text reproduced above:

Their Majesties the Emperor of All the Russias and the Emperor of Germany, in order to localize as much as possible the Russo-Japanese war, have agreed to the following Articles of a treaty of defensive alliance.

ARTICLE I

In case one of the two Empires should be attacked by a European Power its ally will aid it with all its land and sea forces. The two Allies, in case of need, will also make common cause in order to remind France of the obligations she has assumed by the terms of the Franco-Russian treaty of alliance.

ARTICLE II

The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude any separate peace with any common adversary.

ARTICLE III

The undertaking to help one another also extends to the case where acts, committed by one of the two

high contracting parties during the war, such as the delivery of coal to a belligerant, should give rise after the war to complaints by a third Power as to pretended violations of the rights of neutrals.

XXXIX

Neues Palais 17/xi 1904

Dearest Nicky

Your kind letter shows once more that the localisation of the actual war and the avoidance of a European war are the guiding principle of our mutual exertions. I take the liberty of abusing of your kind permission in our mutual interest to propose two changes; one is to modify my proposal, the other the final clause of yours.

It may be possible that the sentence "Afin de localiser la guerre Russo-Japanaise" if through the publication officially or by indiscretion secretly the contents of the treaty became known, could be interpreted by other Powers as meaning that the treaty was only valid *only* in case England went to war as Ally of Japan, i.e. directed as a menace of *provocative* meaning solely against her. In reality and practically it is so: but "Tout verité n'est pas bon a diré."[1] We now see the British Public opinion in a state of nervousness nearly bordering on lunacy, of which it has just given us all some delightful proofs.[2] It would in this mood look upon this treaty as a direct *provocation* and straightaway urge on the final ca-

tastrophe we both are trying to avoid or to postpone at least. Therefore I suggest a sentence used by yourself "afin d'assurer la maintien de la Paix en Europe", which would answer perfectly to our purposes and can *on no account* be looked upon as a *provocation.* We only think of ourselves and refrain from pointing with fingers at anybody (which besides is looked upon as a want of manners in society) Nobody—with a *clean conscience* n.b.—has any right to feel annoyed at such a treaty and it will be very difficult for the irate Jingoes in England to turn its conclusion into a "casus belli".

This change in the wording of the treaty, to my belief, necessitates a certain limitation of time. Either a short one with an abrogation limit, at any moment of year, or if you like it better a longer term. The prolongation would in case—as I fervently hope—the treaty meets the wishes of and proves a boon to the two nations, go on quite by itself automatically. This can be arranged exactly as you like it.

The next change refers to the newly added final clause of the treaty. It must be borne in mind that should you for instance wish the treaty to remain unpublished, indiscretions are possible—walls have ears and diplomatists tongues that will wag—under such circumstances the meaning put upon this sentence would be that I had precisely bound myself to help you to defend the *Conquests* of Russia which would tend to immediately replace Article I in a purely *ag-*

gressive light. This would lead the whole political world to infer that we had—instead of concluding a Defensive Alliance—formed a sort of chartered Company limited for Annexation purposes, possibly involving secret clauses for the private benefit of Germany. The general mistrust ensuing would gravely imperil our mutual Situation, because Amerika would immediately join England—which on no account must be allowed—acting under the suspicion that Russia and Germany were on the move for aggressive operations to further selfish ends. But it will just be the main task of Russian and German diplomatists to stop America joining England. Should the Treaty become known either by official publication or indiscretions, Bülow—in answering questions in Parliament—must be able to declare that no secret clauses exist able to harm the *defensive* nature of the treaty or assuring Germany—au détriment des autres[3]—anything else beyond the help in the Defence of the Peace of Europe, if it were endangered by anybody else. This is why I submit a different wording of the sentence. The ruling idea in it is the continuous polemic of the Russian Press in the last months against a Peace-Congress for mediation, like in 1878 of which your papers are afraid that it may be summoned together again—and signs there are that some Powers are allready working in that direction, especially Paris and London—and which would do everything in its power to bring the victors and vanquished to one and the same level

and try to rob the former of their conquests and advantages as in 1878. Besides this sentence in its new form excludes all possibilities once for all for Germany ever beeing a party to such a Peace Congress, and at the same time robs all evil wischers and critics of the opportunity to suggest that we have any goal in view but that of preserving Peace without provocation. These are my two proposals I venture to submit to your kind approval, which I hope may be accorded to them; intending by them to avoid letting England take an active part in this war, and if possible to hinder America from joining her.

I dont know wether you think it necessary to communicate the secret Clause (III) to France? It is quite as you like; but I believe that the other articles will retain her from turning aside. Declassé[4] I am sure will immediately find out the Anti-Congress tendency in the sense, and considering that he has allready opened negotiations between London and Paris and with other powers for the summoning of a Peace Congress for Meditation, he will be placed in a certain difficulty having to suddenly break off his negociations allready "entamées."[5]

Doubtless the French would much prefer any other grouping of Powers to that of the Alliance à trois as in 1895, but the Russo-German Treaty once a *fact* our combined powers will enact a strong attraction on France, which you have allready foreseen in your telegram of October 29th when you say

"After the arrangement is accepted by us, France is bound to join." Of course it will be the work of your diplomacy to make the necessary arrangements with France, Germany in the meantime remaining silently standing behind you. The Democratic Civilian and Freemasons, Declassé, Combes[6] and Cie have as much to fear from victory as from rout, and the moment they are aware that France would be unable to remain neutral and under the necessity of choosing sides, they will do all within their power to restrain England from going to war. Last not least an excellent expedient to cool British insolence and overbaring would be to make some military demonstrations on the Persio-Afghan frontier,[7] where the British think you powerless to appear with troops during this war; even should the forces at your disposal not suffice for a real attack of India itself they would do for Persia—which has no army —and a pressure on the Indian frontier from Persia will do wonders in England and have remarkably quieting influence on the hot headed Jingoes in London. For I am aware and informed that this is the only thing they are afraid of and that the fear of your entry into India from Turkestan and into Afghanistan from Persia was the real and only cause that the guns of Gibraltar[8] and of the British Fleet remained silent 3 weeks ago! The Indian frontier and Afghanistan are the only part of the Globe where the whole of her Battlefleets are of no avail to England and where their guns are powerless to

meet the invader. India's loss is the death stroke to Great Britain!

This is how I hope that our treaty will fullfill its tasks to preserve the Peace of Europe. Should the revised draft and the motives submitted meet with your approval the signing can be done immediately. I expect the Lambsdorff will receive your commands for the drawing up of formalities. God grant that we may have found the right way to hemm in the horrors of war and give his blessing to our plans. Believe me dearest Nicky, with best love to Alix

Ever your
most aff-ate cousin and sincere friend
Willy

NOTES

1. It is not good to tell the whole truth.
2. The British public was greatly aroused by the Dogger Bank incident, which was caused by the firing on British fishing boats by the Russian Baltic Squadron on its way to the Far East.
3. To the detriment of the others.
4. The French Foreign Minister, one of the creators of the Entente Cordiale.
5. Begun, initiated.
6. The leader of the anti-clerical party in France.
7. In a telegram to the Czar dated November 2nd, the Kaiser said: "From a reliable source in India I am secretly informed that expedition 'a la Thibet' is being quickly prepared for Afghanistan. It is meant to bring that country for once and all under British suzerainty."

8. The British concentrated an overwhelming fleet at Gibraltar after the Dogger Bank incident, ready to meet in case of emergency the Russian fleet upon its arrival in Mediterranean waters.

XL

Projet.

Leurs Majestés les Empereurs de toutes les Russies et d'Allemagne afin d'assurer le maintion de la paix en Europe ont arrêté les articles suivants d'um traité d'alliance dèfensive.

ARTICLE I.

Au cas ou l'un des deux Empires serait attaqué par une Puissance Européenne, son allié l'aidera de toutes ses forces de terre et de mer. Sa Majesté l'Empereur de toutes les Russies fera les demarches necessaires pour initier la France à cet accord et l'engager à s'y associer comme Alliée.

ARTICLE II.

Les hautes parties contractantes s'engagent a ne conclure de paix separée avec aucun adversaire commun.

ARTICLE III.

Le présent Traité restera en vigueur tout qu'il ne sera par denoncé une Année à l'avance.

ARTICLE SECRET.

Les hautes parties contractantes sont convenues de faire cause commune dans le cas ou des actes accomplis par une d'elles pendant la guerre (actuelle?) tels que la livraison le charbon à un belligérant, donneraient lieux par la suite à des réclamations d'une tierce Puissance comme prètendues violations du droit des neutres.

Il resulté des termes du premier alinéa de l'article I que l'Allemagne ne s'associera à aucune action quellequ'elle soit qui pourrait impliquer des tendances hostiles à la Russie.

The following is a translation of the Kaiser's second French draft reproduced above:

Project

Their Majesties the Emperors of All the Russias and Germany, in order to assure the maintenance of peace in Europe, have agreed to the following articles of a treaty of defensive alliance:

ARTICLE I

In case one of the two Empires should be attacked by a European Power its ally will help it with all its land and sea forces. His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias will take the necessary steps to

inform France of this understanding, and to invite her to associate herself with it as an Ally.

ARTICLE II

The high contracting parties undertake not to conclude any separate peace with any common adversary.

ARTICLE III

The present treaty will remain in force so long as it shall not have been denounced a year beforehand.

SECRET ARTICLE

The high contracting parties are agreed to make common cause where acts committed by one of them during the (present?) war, such as the delivery of coal to a belligerent, should give rise in consequence to complaints by a third Power as to pretended violations of the rights of neutrals.

XLI

BERLIN 7/XII 1904

Dearest Nicky

The British Government, as you will have seen in the English press, seems to think the actual moment opportune for an action against the provisioning of your Baltic fleet with coal. Under pretext that it is its duty to maintain stricktest neutrality it has *forbidden* the German vessels[1] belonging or chartered by the Hamburg-America Line to leave British ports. My fears—I wrote to you longer ago—that this would happen have at last come true, and it is now incumbent upon me to take early steps to fix the attitude Germany has to take up vis a vis of this action. It is far from my intention to hurry you in your answer to my last remarks about your proposal anent our defensive treaty. But you will I am sure be fully alive to the fact, that I must now have absolutely positive guarantees from you, wether you intend leaving me unaided or not in case England and Japan should declare war against me, on account of the Coaling of the Russian Fleet by Germany. Should you be unable to absolutely guarantee me, that in such a war you will loyally fight

shoulder to shoulder with me, then I regret to assert to be under the necessity of immediately forbidding German steamers to continue to coal your fleet.

Alvensleben is under orders to at once elucidate the Coaling question with Lambsdorff.

Best love to Alix.

Ever your most aff-ate
cousin and friend
Willy

NOTE

1. It was announced at the time that a German ship had been stopped from coaling at Cardiff because its cargo was believed to be destined for the Russian Baltic fleet.

XLII

Neues Palais 21/xii 1904

Dearest Nicky

Sincerest thanks for your kind letter and two telegrams, as well as for your kind order regulating the coaling question. Of course we are unable today to foresee wether the declaration given by your Government will prove sufficient to meet every kind of complication which may arise out of the present run of affairs. It is however not my intention to press upon you any solution which might appear undesirable to you. We shall under all circumstances remain true and loyal friends. My opinion about the agreement is still the same; it is impossible to take France into our confidence *before* we two have come to a definite arrangement. Loubet[1] and Declassé are no doubt experienced statesmen. But they not beeing Princes or Emperors I am unable to place them—in a question of *confidence* like this one—on the same footing as you my equal, my cousin and friend.

Should you therefore think it imperative to acquaint the French Government with our negotiations *before* we have arrived at definite settlement, I consider it better for all parties concerned to con-

tinue in our present condition of mutual independence, and of the spontaneous promotion of each others ends as far as the situation will permit. I firmly trust and believe that the hopes of our beeing useful to each other may be realized not only during the war, but also after it during the Peace negotiations, for our interests in the Far East are identical in more than one respect.

I wish you and Alix with all my heart a merry Xmas and a happy New Year, and may the Lord's Blessing be on you all, not forgetting the boy. With sincerest love to Alix believe me dearest Nicky

Ever Your
most aff-ate and devoted cousin and friend
Willy

NOTE

1. Emile Loubet, President of France.

XLIII

BERLIN 2/1 1905

Dearest Nicky

Best thanks for your kind letter and New Years cards which are well executed. The Cossack charge is most effective, and one cannot help thinking what might have happened if at Liao-Yang[1] General Samsonoff[2] had ridden a charge like that with his 17,000 sabres and lances against the Japan left wing. The news of the fall of Port Arthur[3] received here yesterday evening created a very great sensation. We all here feel deepest sympathy for the valiant Generals and the brave diminishing band of heroes under their orders who strove to the utmost and last to fullfill their duty towards their Emperor and their Country; their defence of Port Arthur will become proverbial for all ages, and be upheld as an example to be emulated as long as a soldier will exist, honour to them forever! The imminence of the fall of the doomed fortress had for some time already set the diplomatic tongues wagging in the different capitals of the world; many and different were the rumours and news of armistices and even peace arrangements which reached me

from everywhere. It beeing rather difficult to discern truth from invention of phantasy, I hope you wont fancy that I intrude upon your privacy, when I address myself to you to beg you to tell me what your plans for the future are, so that, if possible I may make myself useful to you, and be enabled to shape my course of my policy. The more so as Lambsdorff told Alversleben the other day "Que la France connait déjà nos conditions."[4] Now, I prefer being informed by yourself directly, instead in a round about way through other agencies, as I have firmly stood to you and your country from the first as your faithful friend. After a long spell of unusually warm and foggy weather which enabled us to ride up to Xmas nearly, a very heavy gale suddenly burst upon us followed by sharp frost and snow, and winter seems to have set in in earnest, this makes me think of the conditions of life through which the Armies in Manchuria have to go now, remaining stationary for so long time as the months gone bye? I am so glad that you rewarded the bravery of my Regiment, which has greatly distinguished itself on the Sha-ho, by so many decorations, I hope they also get a good number of St. Georges Crosses

Now that the programme for the renewal of your fleet has been published[5] I hope you wont forget to remind your authorities to remember our great firms at Stettin, Kiel, etc.; They will I am sure furnish fine specimens of line of battle ships. I am so glad that Ernie[6] has again become engaged and I will go

to his wedding beginning of next month. I hope you will kindly accept the two vases for Xmas, which come from our Royal Porcelain Factory, they are a symbol of my warmest wishes for you and your family and country for the coming year in which God may preserve you all believe me Ever your

most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

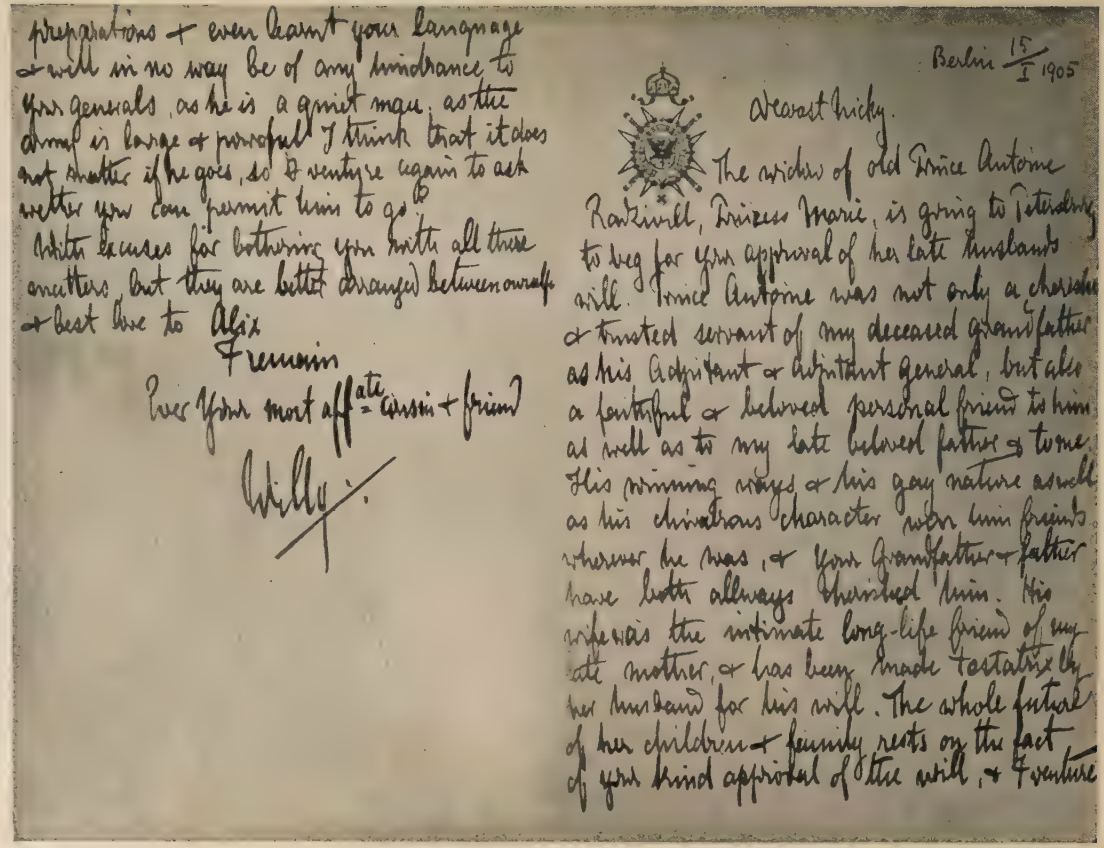
1. August 24th to September 4th. The Japanese left, after heavy fighting in which General Samsonoff's cavalry took part, broke the Russian right, and captured Liao-Yang, the Russian military capital of Southern Manchuria, and a point of great strategic value.
2. Commanded at the above battle the Siberian Cossack Division.
3. General Stoessel offered to surrender on January 1st, 1905. The Kaiser conferred the "Ordre pour le Mérite" on both General Nogi and General Stoessel.
4. France already knows our conditions.
5. In the London "Morning Post" of January 2nd, 1905, stating that $800,000,000 were to be expended.
6. After the dissolution of his marriage with Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Ernest Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse, was married to Princess Eleonore of Solms-Hohensolms-Lich on February 2nd, 1905.

XLIV

Berlin 15/1 1905

Dearest Nicky

The Widow of old Prince Antoine Radzivill, Princess Marie,[1] is going to St. Petersburg to beg for your approval of her late husbands will. Prince Antoine was not only a cherished and trusted servant of my deceased grandfather as his Adjutant and Adjutant General, but also a faithful and beloved personal friend to him as well as to my late beloved father and to me. His winning ways and his gay nature as well as his chivalrous character won him friends wherever he was, and your Grandfather and father have both allways cherished him. His wife was the intimate long-life friend of my late mother, and has been made testatrix by her husband for his will. The whole future of her children and family rests on the fact of your kind approval of the will, and I venture to plead her cause to you and to beg that you will bestow your kindness on her, as she is very sad and broken down by her loss; this she feels the more as her eldest son is an hopeless idiot in an Asylum, so that she must look after her Grandchildren too.—Your Ambassador Osten-Sacken is



Berlin 15/I 1905

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preparations & even learnt your language & will in no way be of any hindrance to your generals as he is a quiet man, as the Army is large & powerful I think that it does not matter if he goes, so I venture again to ask whether you can permit him to go.

Pardon excuses for bothering you with all these matters, but they are better arranged between ourselves & best love to Alix

I remain

Ever Your most affte cousin & friend

Willy.

LETTER NO. XLIV

In which the Kaiser asks for some favors from "Nicky."

in great anxiety on account of his poor old wife. She has had a very serious operation made in her back—without having been able to use chloroform—and is unable to lie down but must spend her nights sitting in a chair and suffering terrible pain, so that considering her age of 84, her life is feared for. Poor old man, the suspense is very telling upon him, and I am afraid that should she die, he will not be able to work as well as formerly and perhaps think of retiring. Should a change once take place at your Embassy here, I would venture *quite privately,* to ask you to send Isvolsky[2] here. He is one of the best men in your Foreign Service, and an intimate friend of long standing of Count Bülow's, who would be overpleased at having him here, as they formerly served together as diplomatists, and as he cherishes Isvolsky much. Lastly may I once more remind you of your kind promise, twice given, and twice put off, that my brother in law Frederic Leopold could be allowed to join your army. The last time in July all was arranged and ready, when he was put off, which placed him in a very difficult position vis a vis to our army and officers, he beeing as we say "blamirt," especially so, when Charles Hohenzollern left for Japan, which was done, because we thought Fr. Leopold would leave for Mukden too. Now the people point at Fr. Leopold and the poor fellow is awfully crestfallen; he has bought lots of clothes and things and made every effort of preparations and even learnt your tongue and will

in no way be of any hindrance to your generals, as he is a quiet man; as the army is large and powerful I think that it does not matter if he goes, so I venture again to ask wether you can permit him to go?

With excuse for bothering you with all these matters, but they are better arranged between ourselves and best love to Alix I remain

Ever your most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Princess Marie Radziwill des marquis de Castellane was the widow of Prince Antoine Radziwill who died in Berlin on December 16th, 1904.
2. M. A. P. Izvolsky was Russian Minister at Copenhagen 1902-1906, and in May, 1906, he succeeded Count Lamsdorf as Foreign Minister. In 1910 he became Ambassador in Paris, where he died on August 16th, 1919.

XLV

Berlin 6/II 1905

Dearest Nicky

Your kind letter reached me on the morning of my birthday so early that your wishes were the first I received. Please accept my warmest thanks for them and God grant they may be fullfilled! Your letter reached me in a moment of dire anxiety, for just then my poor boy[1] was seriously ill and it was then a matter of life and death! The whole following week was a terrible trial and my poor wife suffered agonies watching near the bedside of the patient; thanks be to God that he heard our prayers and saved our boys life!

My brother in law[2] is deeply grateful for your kind permission accorded to him that he may at last start for the front. On his way out he is to report himself to you and give you these lines. His entourage has been limited as you wished and he is instructed to keep quite in the background, so as to in no way hamper the Commander in Chief, and he begs that the latter may take no undue notice of him, and not to forget that he is a simple spectator who wants to learn the art of war earnestly.

You have been through serious troubles[3] from the effervescence and agitation among the lower classes; I am glad your soldiers showed themselves reliable and true to their sermon[4] to their Emperor. The reception of the deputation of workmen[5]—who seem to have been ill advised and partially goaded into striking by agitators—made a good impression everywhere, as it showed them that they could see in the face of their "Väterchen"[6] if they asked for this honour in due form! Many and most vague are the plans for reform in your country—as far as I can make out—but the most sensible and best adapted to its people and their customs, seems to my humble notion, the formation of a body of men chosen from the best and ablest heads in the different "Zemstovs." This body would be attached to the "Imperial Council" and to it could be given any question of importance having a vital interest for the whole of Russia to be worked out and prepared for the "Imperial Council"; also men well versed with the special theme under discussion, could be called upon to give their advice, beeing chosen from every part of the people ad hoc. And the *comble*[7] would be if you from time to time presided yourself so as to be able to hear as many different men as possible, in order to be able to form a correct judgment on the question before them. Just like I did in 1890,[8] when I called in the great Comittee for the elaboration of the "Social Laws" for the working classes,

after the great Strike—and which I presided for weeks. In this manner this body would be able to provide the "Imperial Council" with every information it wants, enabling you in the same time to remain in touch with the great bulk of the lower classes; thereby ensuring to the latter every means to make themselves heard in matters appertaining to their welfare and thus forming a direct canal of communication between the simple folk and their "Emperor and Father." Besides you would be able —on account of your own information—to keep good watch and control on your "Imperial Council" and the "Comittee of Ministers" to see the work by them is done as *you* wish and you PEOPLE want; this way ensures *the executive* once for all to the *"autocratic Czar"* not to a leading *minister* with a board of helpless Colleagus blindly following his lead.

On my birthday my tallest aide-de-Camp—well known to you—H. v. Plüskow—in Paris the ladies called him "Plus que haut"![9]—has been made Colonel of your Alexander Grenadiers; they gave the Guard of Honour for my birthday "Razwod"[10] and looked magnificent, as you will see on the enclosed photos. In due time—when things have calmed down and it suits you—the new Colonel will report himself to you.

As I heard that Serge had mentioned that your authorities were annoyed with Krupp for not keep-

ing his time to furnish the batteries ordered by Russia I caused an inquiry to be made at his works and send you the copy of the report I received, showing that there is no grounds for the above mentioned complaints. Inquiries made at the Offices of the Hamb. Americ. Line equally show that the roumours to the effect, that they have taken guns and ammunition out in their ships for Japan, is totally unfounded; they have not taken arms or stores of war of any kind to or for Japan. It seems that the clouds of French and English Agents besieging the Admiralty and War Office—angry at our firms furnishing your Government well and better than theirs are able—are starting no ends of canards "au detriment" of the Germans; I venture to suggest they should be less believed and kicked into the Newa besides.

The Japs have just ordered 4 Line of Battleships in England; they are to be copies of the newest type in England between 18000-19000 Tons with 25 cm. guns as medium artillery and 30 cm. guns as heavy artillery. With best wishes for a better outlook for you and your country and much love to Alix

I remain ever Your

most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

P.S. End of next month we shall take our boy to the Mediterranean and to Sicily.

NOTES

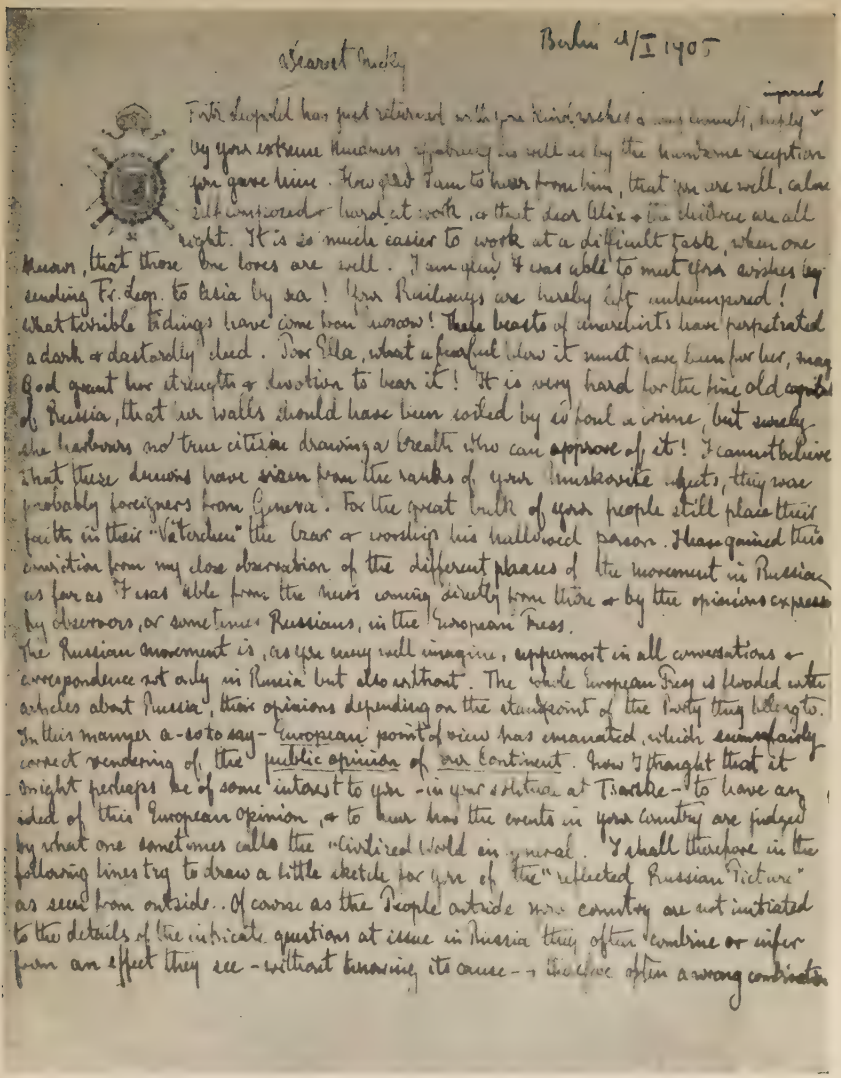
1. Prince Eitel Friedrich, the Kaiser's second son, had been suffering from inflammation of the lungs.
2. Prince Frederic Leopold reached Petrograd however, only to be sent back to Berlin instead of Manchuria.
3. A reference to the Bloody Sunday, January 9-22, when a terrible massacre of the people who had gathered to present a petition to the Czar in front of the Winter Palace took place.
4. The Kaiser apparently confused the word "sermon" with the French word "serment," which means "oath."
5. The Czar received later, on February 1st, a deputation of workmen, to appease the anger caused by the massacre of the petitioners.
6. Little Father.
7. Climax.
8. The Kaiser is alluding to the beginning of his reign, when for a time he posed as the Arbeiter-Kaiser, the Workmen's Emperor, and called an international congress to Berlin for the benefit of the German workers in March, 1890.
9. A pun on Plüskow's name. In the Great War Plüskow, now a Lieutenant-General, commanded the 25th division.
10. Parade.

XLVI

BERLIN 21/II 1905

Dearest Nicky

Fritz Leopold has just returned with your kind wishes and compliments, deeply impressed by your extreme kindness affability as well as by the handsome reception you gave him. How glad I am to hear from him, that you are well, calm selfcomposed and hard at work, and that dear Alix and the children are all right. It is so much easier to work at a difficult task, when one knows, that those one loves are well. I am glad I was able to meet your wishes by sending Fr. Leop. to Asia by sea! Your Railways are hereby left unhampered! What terrible tidings have come from Moscow![1] These beasts of anarchists have perpetrated a dark and dastardly deed. Poor Ella,[2] what a fearful blow it must have been for her may God grant her strength and devotion to bear it! It is very hard for the fine old capital of Russia, that her walls should have been soiled by so foul a crime but surely she harbours no true citizen drawing a breath who can approve of it! I cannot believe that these demons have rizen from the ranks of your Mosko-



Berlin 4/I 1905

Dearest Nicky

Fritz Leopold has just returned with your kind wishes & most warmly appreciated by your extreme kindness of heart as well as by the handsome reception you gave him. How glad I am to hear from him, that you are well, calm & undisturbed - hard at work, & that dear Alix & the children are all right. It is so much easier to work at a difficult task, when one knows, that those one loves are well. I am glad it was able to meet your wishes by sending Fr. Leop. to Russia by sea! Your Railways are hereby left unimpaired! What terrible tidings have come from Moscow! Those beasts of anarchists have perpetrated a dark & dastardly deed. Poor Ella, what a fearful blow it must have been for her, may God grant her strength & devotion to bear it! It is very hard for the fine old capital of Russia, that its walls should have been soiled by its foul a crime, but surely she harbours no true citizen drawing a breath who can approve of it! I cannot believe that these demons have risen from the ranks of your Muskovite subjects, they were probably foreigners from Geneva. For the great bulk of your people still place their faith in their "Vatershen" the Czar & worship his hallowed person. I have gained this conviction from my close observation of the different phases of the movement in Russia as far as it was able from the news coming directly from there & by the opinions expressed by Russians, or sometimes Russians, in the European Press.

The Russian movement is, as you may well imagine, uppermost in all conversations & correspondence not only in Russia but also without. The whole European Press is loaded with articles about Russia, their opinions depending on the standpoint of the Party they belong to. In this manner a - so to say - "European" point of view has emanated, which even fairly correct rendering of the public opinion of our Continent. Now I thought that it might perhaps be of some interest to you - in your solitude at Tsarskoe - to have an idea of this European opinion, & to hear how the events in your country are judged by what one sometimes calls the "civilized World in general". I shall therefore in the following lines try to draw a little sketch for you of the "reflected Russian Picture" as seen from outside. Of course as the People outside your country are not initiated to the details of the intricate questions at issue in Russia they often combine or infer from an effect they see - without knowing its cause - & therefore often a wrong conclusion

"DEAREST NICKY FROM HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND WILLY"

The cousinly familiarity between the Kaiser and the Czar is shown by letter No. XLVI in which the Kaiser takes a fling at the Russian anarchists that he later encouraged.

vite subjects, they were probably foreigners from Geneva. For the great bulk of your people still place their faith in their "Väterchen" the Czar and worship his hallowed person. I have gained this conviction from my close observation of the different phases of the movement in Russia as far as I was able from the news coming directly from there and by the opinions expressed by observers, or sometimes Russians, in the European Press.

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lead to a wrong conclusion, because their ignorance of the true facts have left a breach. The foreign spectators are often forced to "Jump to conclusions," but we must add: "Wo die Begriffe fehlen, stellt oft ein Wort zu rechter Zeit sich ein."[3]

Therefore I must "avant tout"[4] beg your pardon for writing to you things that you will probably since long have learned from your diplomats reports and crave your kind forbearance and forgiveness if I—as a loyal firm and devoted friend of yours am obliged to do—also must record opinions, which may seem to you hard, ungenerous, false or even hurt your feelings. But Russia is in the act of turning over a new leaf in her history, and the development shows a tendency to prepare the beginning for a certain modernization.

Such a process, you will agree, in a mighty nation like yours is bound to command the most widespread interest in Europe, and "comme de raison" before all in the neighbouring country. The methods to be adopted, the means which are to be used, and the men who are to do the work have direct influence across your frontiers, upon the other nations. If I said that the "opinion" was a "European" one I must not omit the fact that many Russians who have passed through here in the last months, and all those living all over Europe—especially in Paris and France—have also contributed to lend colour to the picture; so that the facts forming the base for the "European opinion" mostly are supplied by France,

who as "amie et Alliée"[5] is allways the best informed about Russia. The outcome of it is this:

"On dit:" The Regime Mirski[6] too suddenly allowed the Press a greater liberty than before and dropped the reins—so tightly held by Plehwe—too soon. Hence a sudden flood of unheard of articles and open leters addressed to the Ruler, a thing up to then thought impossible in Russia; some of them most insolent calculated to diminish the respect for the Autocratic Rule. This opportunity was seized by the Revolutionary Party to get hold of the unsuspecting workpeople, to work them up into a state of ferment and to make them demand things —they were incapable of understanding—in a peremptory, disrespectful manner accompanied by language and acts which came very near looking like revolution. This brought the working class—I am sure against their will—into direct opposition to the Government and into conflicts with the Authorities, who had to maintain law and order. As these misguided and ill informed bands, mostly composed of men taught to look at the Zar as their "Father" and to "tutoyer"[7] him as such, were under the impression that they would be able to place their wishes before him by coming before his Palace, it is suggested that it might have been practical of the Zar had received a certain number of them—drawn up in the square amid a cordon of troops—and had addressed them from the Balcony of the Winter Palace, where he would have been accompanied by the highest Clergy

and the Cross and his suite as a "Father" speaks to his children, before the Military had to act; it were perhaps not impossible that in this manner bloodshed might have quite been avoided or at least diminished.

The example of Nicolai I has been often quoted, who quelled a very serious rebellion by personally riding into their midst his child in his arms, and brought the rebels to their knees in short time. It is thought that now, as then, the person of the Zar has still an enormous hold on the simple people, and that they still bow down to his hallowed appearance. A word from such a position and in such an "entourage" would have awed and calmed the masses and sounded far away over their heads into the farthest corner of the Realm surely defeating the agitators. These are still more or less said to be in command of the masses because such a word has not yet been spoken by the Ruler. The Agitators consequently are continuing their game on the imagination of the people in maintaining: "It is His wish, he thinks so, but you cannot hear him because of the bands of officials who manage to fence him off and keep him far away from his people." The beguiled masses follow and believe these men til it is too late, and blood must flow.

Many reforms have been begun, and new laws are being discussed in batches, but curiously enough the People generally say: "This is by Witte, that is inspired by Mouravioff, that is Pobed.[8] idea." But

the Zar is never named for they are unaquainted with his real thoughts! Though the Committee of Ministers or the Senate issue the Manifestoes in the Zars name yet these bodies are much to vague and mysterious to the looker on as to evoke anything like enthusiasm or interest with their acts. In an Autocratic Regime, it is argued, it must be the *Ruler himself* who gives out the password and the programme of action in a unmistakable official way. It seems that every body is expecting something of this sort by way of an act of will by the Zar personally. As long as this does not happen the impression at large will continue, that the announced reforms and law paragraphs are only ministerial work meant for show and to throw sand into the peoples eyes; and men will continue to anxiously miss the firm hand on the country's helm, guided by a master mind with a clear purpose, steering for a clearly defined goal. This state of things creates a feeling of uneasiness which in its turn evolves dissatisfaction generating fault finding "a tort et a travers" on a grand scale even with the mildest man of the very best intentions and actuated by the sincerest and purest motives. In consequence the disappointed spectator—perhaps also the subjects—is more and more prepared to throw on the Zar's shoulders the responsibility for everything with which they are dissatisfied. In ordinary times this matters very little, and in constitutional Nations it is not as dangerous, as the Kings Ministers have to mount the breach and to defend

his person. But in Russia, where the ministers are unable to shield the sacred person of the Ruler, as they are known to be his tools simply, such troubles which fill the Russians minds with unrest and uneasiness, and which lead to the saddling of the Ruler with the odium for everything disagreeable that happens, are a very serious danger for the Ruler and his dynasty, because they tend to make him *unpopular*. Now it is argued that the "intelligentia" and the Society in parts are allready dissatisfied, should the Zar also become *"unpopular"* with the masses the agitators might easily raise such a storm that it would be very uncertain, wether the Dynasty would be able to weather it.

On one point all seem to agree in Europe as by common "consensus" that the Zar personally is solely responsible for the war. The outbreak, the surprise caused by the sudden attack, the evidence of want of preparation is said to be his fault. They say that the thousands of families who have lossed their male relatives by the war or must miss them for long months lay the blood and their complaints at the steps of the Zar's throne. It is maintained that the Reservists called out to leave their homes, do it reluctantly detesting to fight in a country whose existence they did not know of, and for a cause which is unpopular to them. They are careworn when they think of their wife and children they leave behind, slowly sinking into poverty and helpless misery they lay their anguish and their cares at the

door of the Zar's Palace wishing he had left them at home.

The reports from the Foreign and Russiar Correspondents with the Army show it fighting an uphill fight against a most redoubtable foe. It had to begin war under very difficult circumstances, not having had time to properly prepare for the task, under the disadvantage of inferior numbers with which it was unable to stem the inrushing tide of mishaps and to meet the terrible onslaught of a foe known to have been preparing for this action during the last five years. For all this the Zar is thought to be responsible. Also the fearful losses of the Navy are shouldered upon him.

Now the responsibility for a war is a very serious thing for a Ruler, that I know by experience from what my late Grandfather told me. He a man personally of the mildest and most peaceful disposition and allready in old age was called upon to wage 3 wars during his reign! And for each of them he took the full responsibility. But he had a clear conscience and his people loyally and enthusiastically supported him; the whole nation rising like a man and resolved to win or die, victory or destruction, but fight to the end; he and his subjects felt that Providence was on their side, and that it is as good if victory was allready won. Such wars then are easy to be borne for the Ruler because his whole People share the burden with him. But the responsibility for an unpopular war is quite a different

matter; when the glow of flaming patriotism is unkindled and when the nation as a whole takes no willing part in it, and suddenly sends its sons to the front because the Zar so wills it, but without making his cause their own that is a fearful and heavy load to bear; whose weight can only be lightened by the pureness of motives which give the Ruler the clearness of conscience necessary to enable him to expect his subjects to fight for him even if they are unable to discern the motive themselves

These words must seem very strange to you and I hear you ask with astonishment "The war unpopular! Impossible!" I can only answer that the amount of private correspondence received in France leaves no doubt that it is so.

The war is very unpopular with *all* classes in Russia the officers not excepted especially as victories have up to now been denied to the Russian arms. The impression rests with the officers of the French Army—your Allies—that even the confidence in Kouropatkine is beginning to give way, and as if the harmony, essential to success, between the different commanders of the Russian forces left much to be desired. If true this state of things would hamper the operations and jeopardize the chances for victory; and it is necessary that it should be remedied to and that soon, or the army and its discipline would suffer by it otherwise. The solution I own is most difficult.

It seems however that it is generally agreed to,

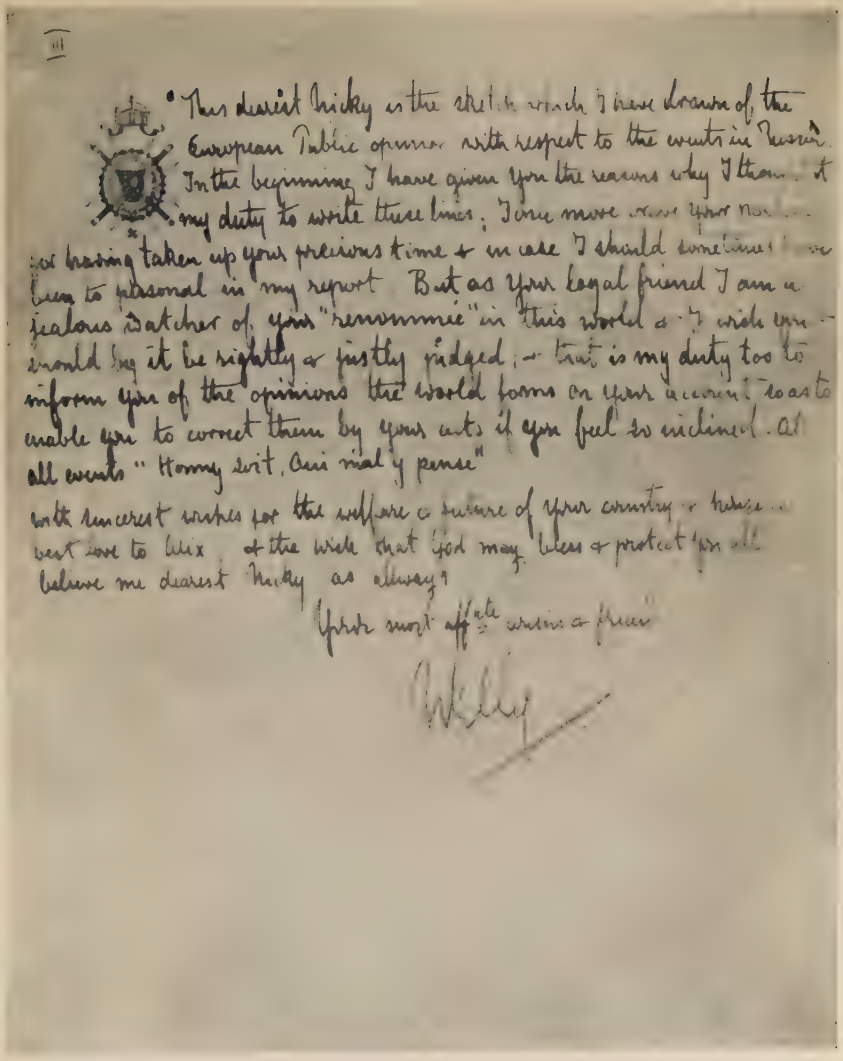
that Kouropatkine has more talents for a Chief of the Staff under another General as leader, than to be a leader himself, as he is rather slow and lacking somewhat in the element called the "Offensive"; this leader is difficult to find as the Generals, senior to Kouropatkine are mostly too old and out of the ranks since long; besides it would be doubtful, wether he would assent to such a change. On the other hand his knowledge, it is said, of the country, enemy, their mode of fighting, of the feeding and caring for the army are quite invaluable and cannot be missed from the field. The result of all this pondering is, that people begin to hint that the Zar himself might perhaps personally take over the Command in Chief, and joining his brave troops, restore their confidence, cheer them by taking his share of hardships, electrify them by his presence and preserve the services of Kouropatkine for his troops, as he would act as chief of the Staff to his "war lord." As I have shown above, there is—one may say—a slowly rising sort of a tide of misinterpretation, unrest and disobedience which must evidently be stemmed and calmed down; and the European Public as well as the Russian Nation is instinctively looking toward the Zar, and expecting that he will come forth and do something grandly, a great personal act; meant to show all that he is the Autocratic Ruler of his People and willing to allay their anxieties and pains as far as is in his power. This general expectation is very neatly put into words by

someone who said: "Il faut que l'Empereur fasse on grande acte pour affermir son pouvoir de nouveau, et sauvegarder sa dynastie qui est menacée, il faut qu'il paye de sa personne"![9] But how?! After what I wrote about the war, you are perfectly at liberty to ask another question: "Why is the war unpopular, why does it seem that I am not backed by my whole People, why do they lack enthusiasm for the fight. We were attacked and our flag insulted, and we have to fight for its honour and our prestige?!!" The Foreign observers fancy there is an answer forthcoming. It is this. In former times your forefathers before they went to war used to repair to Moscow, pray in the old churches and then assemble the Notables in the Kremlin inside, and the People outside in the courtyard and announce to them with great ceremony the necessity for the war and called upon their loyal subjects to follow them to the field battle. Such a call from the Kremlin in Moscow—which is still the real capital of Russia—never failed to find a response from the Russian Nation! Such an act, such a call to arms was expected by Moscow and Russia from you in the days following the 8th of February of last year, and they then were ready to answer with enthusiasm smarting under the fell blow, which had fallen on them unawares, and the Citizens of the great Capital looked eagerly forward for your coming; it is even hinted that the officials had your train got ready for starting. But the Zar came not. Moscow was left

to itself; the "holy war" eagerly expected was not proclaimed, and there was no call to arms. This Moscow looked upon as a slight, and smarted under it. It has become disaffected and shows her disaffection openly, her example beeing followed all over Russia. The other day the remark was made 'Il est temps que l'Empereur remette la main sur Moscou; avec Moscou il parviendra a remettre l'ordre en Russie, sans Moscou, cela sera tres difficile."[10] Well European observers think that it could be managed, that the Zar could make the expected "Grande acte" by going to Moscow and assembling the nobility and notables in his magnificent Palace speak to them; perhaps beginning with a reprimand for publishing letters and addresses sent to him, which is bad manners and must not be repeated, and then proclaim the reforms he has prepared for his People as far as he thinks fit. Not the promise of a general legislative assembly, no Constituante or Convention Nationale, but a Habeas Corpus Act and wider extension of the Conseil de l'Empire. No liberty of the assembly or of the Press, but strict orders to all censors to abstain from any chicanes henceforth. Further the Zar would let the hearers know what he has decided about the army—in case he thinks it possible or necessary to go out himself—to tell tham and to exhort them to abstain from all internal quarrels till the enemy is routed. After this the Zar "entouré" by the Clergy with banners and cross and incense and holy Icons would go out on the balkony

and read out the same speech he held before, as a Manifestoe to his assembled loyall subjects in the Court Yard below, encircled by the serried ranks of the troops "la bajonette au canon" "le sabre au poing".[11] When you would tell tham that you—in case you thought it necessary—would go to share the hardships of their brothers and relatives in the field, who had to go out by your command, and to cheer them and try to lead them to *victory,* it is argued that the People will be deeply touched and cheer you and fall on their knees and pray for you. The Zar's popularity would be recovered and he would gain his peoples sympathy besides. All persons who take an interest in the Russian events are unanimous in their opinion that "a la longue" the Zar must not remain in perpetuum in Tsarske or Peterhof; but that it is sure that should his first appearance be made under the above mentioned conditions, the sensation and impression created in the whole world would be enormous, which would with bated breath listen to him when he addressed it, as his forefathers formerly did, from the Ramparts of the Kremlin.

This dearest Nicky is the sketch which I have drawn of the European Public opinion with respect to the events in Russia. In the beginning I have given you the reasons why I thought it my duty to write these lines. I once more crave your pardon for having taken up your precious time and in case I should sometimes have been to personal in my re-



LETTER NO. XLVI

port. But as your loyal friend I am a jealous watcher of your "renommée" in this world and I wish you should by it be rightly and justly judged; and that is my duty too to inform you of the opinions the world forms on your account so as to enable you to correct them by your acts if you feel so inclined. At all events "Honny soit, qui mal y pense".[12]

With sincerest wishes for the welfare and future of your country and house, and best love to Alix, and the wish that God may bless and protect you all believe me dearest Nicky as allways

Your most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Grand Duke Sergei, uncle of the Czar, Governor-General of Moscow, was assassinated at Moscow on February 17th, 1905.
2. Wife of the assassinated Grand Duke Sergei and sister of the Czarina.
3. Where understanding is lacking, a word at the right time will help.
4. First of all.
5. Friend and ally.
6. After the assassination of von Plehwe, the reactionary Russian Minister of the Interior, Prince Swiatopol-Mirski, a liberal, was appointed to his post.
7. To be on familiar terms with him.
8. Constantine Petrovitch Pobedonostzev, the famous Russian statesman.
9. The Emperor should perform a great act in order to affirm

his power anew and safeguard his menaced dynasty, he should take a personal risk.

10. It is time that the Emperor again should put his hand on Moscow; with Moscow he will be able to restore order in Russia, without Moscow that will be very difficult.
11. With bayonets fixed and drawn sabres.
12. "Evil to him who evil thinks." The Kaiser misspelled the French word "honni."

XLVII

Berlin 3/vi 1905

Dearest Nicky

The kind lines which you entrusted to Micha's care and were given me yesterday have deeply touched me. The memorable events you allude to are all clearly graved in my memory and remind me how the years have gone by, and how often since long we two have been brought into personal relations. The natural consequence of this is a firm feeling of mutual friendship that developed between us both based on a perfect understanding of each other. These relations have flourished through the long years for the welfare of our countries, to rule which we have been called upon by Providence. They were and I hope will continue to be guarantees of Peace and welfare for the two countries as well as for the world. I well remember the moment in the church in the Winter Palais when you took your oath on the glorious tatters of the old Cossack standard, and the breathless silence of an enormous audience of illoustrious people! How moved your dear father was when he kissed you after the ceremony! How long ago that is! Now you are in

his place and have to lead your country through one of the most difficult phases of its development. How I have been feeling for and thinking of you all these last months I need not say! Also of every phase of Admiral Roshestwensky's progress! The great stake which he represented in your hand has been played and honnourably lossed.[1] He did everything in his powers to come up to your wishes, but Providence willed it otherwise and he met defeat bravely serving his master to the last! My fullest sympathy is with him and you.

From the purely *military strategical* point of view the defeat in the straits of Corea ends the chances for a decided turn of the scales in your favour; the Japanese are now free to pour any amount of reserves, recruits, ammunition, etc. into Mandschuria for the siege of Wladiwostok, which will hardly be able to resist very long without a fleet to support it. The Army of Lenewitsch[2] will need at least 3 or 4 fresh Army Corps to bring it up to its former efficiency and even then it is difficult to foretell what the consequences will be and wether another large battle will promise more success than the former did? Formally it of course possible, even under these adverse circumstances to continue the war for any amount of time. But then on the other hand the *human* part must not be overlooked. Your country has sent thousands of its sons to the fronte, where they died, or were taken ill and were left cripples for the rest of their lives. Now as I wrote to you

in my last letter—Febr. 6th.—the war is very unpopular and the People see their sons and fathers reluctantly even unwilling leave their homes to fight for a cause they not only not espouse but abhor! Is it compatible with the responsibility of a Ruler to continue to force a whole nation against its declared will to send its sons to be killed by hecatombs only for his sake? Only for his way of conception of National honour? After the People by their behaviour have clearly shown their disapproval of a continuance of the war? Will not in time to come the life and blood of all uselessly sacrificed thousands be laid at the Ruler's door, and will he not once be called upon by Him the Ruler and Master of all Kings and men to answer for those, who were placed under his control by the Creator, who entrusted their welfare to him? National honour is a very good thing in itself, but only in the case that the whole of the Nation *itself* is determined to uphold it with all the means possible. But when a nations ways show that it has enough and that "tout est purdu fort l'honneur"[3] is its way of thinking, is it not reasonable that also its Ruler should then—no doubt with a heavy heart—draw the consequences and conclude peace? Even though it be a bitter one? Rather than risking through the prolongation of an unpopular war to create such a bitter feeling in his country that it would not even refrain from taking serious steps to eventually force the Ruler to comply to their wish and adopt their

views? Of course there is the Army to be considered. It has fought and bravely fought—through heat and cold for 1-1/2 years trying to win victoria for you and your country, but up to now Providence has withheld success from it. Defeat, fearful loss of life, and sufferings unspeakable have instead been sent to the poor Army and have been willingly borne by those capital, brave, quiet, selfsacrificing fellows your soldiers. That they should burn for revange and be ready to do battle at every possible moment is quite natural. But is there any new leader or General among the Captains who is able to *guarantee* success, so that it would justify a new tremendous effort at the expense of thousands of the soldiers lives? Is the Army really absolutely convinced that it will yet be able to turn the scales? To this question you of course alone are able to know the answer. Should the answer however be given in the negative by your Generals in your soldiers name, declaring on their honour that they could only die for their Emperor but hardly win any *decisive* victories for him, then I think your conscience may be at rest as to wether you ought to go on fighting or not, and you could open the Peace negociations which would be hailed with joy by all your loyal subjects throughout Russia after the tribute of blood they readily gave their Emperor. You may then say like the old French Grenadier Bombardon sings: "Das Glück des Kriegs hat wider uns entschieden, doch die Armee hat ihre Pflicht gethan, die hälfte fiel, der

Rest ward Invaliden! Je nun man trägt was man nicht ändern kann"![4]

Napoleon I and Fredrick the Great also suffered defeat!

It must be looked upon as Gods will that things have taken this course! God has imposed this burthen on you, and it must be borne, but perhaps by His intentions and with His help, lasting good may come out of all this in the end; a new life and a new order of things for the development of Russia may spring from this time of trial which would be a recompence your subjects richly deserved.

Forgive the length of my letter, but I feel bound as your friend and collegue to tell you what I think is true and right! You know the motives that prompt me, and you are free to do with these lines what you think fit.

Should however the ideas propounded in this letter coincide with yours and you think that I could be of any even smallest use to you for the preparatory steps to bring about Peace, pray dispose of me at your leisure. I may perhaps turn your attention to the fact that no doubt the Japanese have the highest regard for America before all other nations. Because this mighty rising Power with its tremendous fleet is next to them. If anybody in the world is able to influence the Japanese and to induce them to be reasonable in their proposals, it is President Roosevelt.[5] Should it meet with your approval I could easily place myself—*privately*—en rapport with

him, as we are very intimate; also my ambassador there is a friend of his. Besides you have Mr. Meyer[6] whom I know since years, who has my fullest confidence you may send for him, talk with him openly, he most discret and trustworthy, a charming causeur with agreeable manners! Here the Brides Entry[7] took place in splendid weather and amidst great enthusiasm! Best love to Alix from your

Aff-ate friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. The Russian Baltic Fleet, under Admiral Rozhdjestvensky, was disastrously defeated on May 27-28 by the Japanese fleet under Admiral Togo in the Straits of Korea.
2. General Linievitch was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian army after Kuropatkin's retirement.
3. All is lost save honor.
4. The fortune of war has gone against us, but the army did its duty; one-half fell, the rest became invalids. What cannot be altered must be borne.
5. Two days before this letter was written, President Roosevelt conferred with the Japanese Minister, Takahira, at the White House on the possibility of opening peace negotiations. On June 2nd Roosevelt received the Russian Ambassador. On June 7th he sent an identical note to Russia and Japan, proposing the opening of peace negotiations. The peace conference at Portsmouth opened on August 9th.
6. President Roosevelt in his autobiography says of the peace negotiations between Russia and Japan: "During the course of the negotiations I tried to enlist the aid of the governments of one nation which was friendly to Russia, and of another

nation which was friendly to Japan in helping bring about peace. I got no aid from either. I did, however, receive aid from the Emperor of Germany. His ambassador at St. Petersburg was the one ambassador who helped the American ambassador, Mr. Meyer, at delicate and doubtful points of the negotiations. Mr. Meyer . . . rendered literally invaluable aid by insisting upon himself seeing the Czar at critical periods of the transaction, when it was no longer possible for me to act successfully through the representatives of the Czar, who were often at cross purposes with each other."

7. This rather abrupt reference to the "Bride's entry" concerns the future wife of the German Crown Prince, Duchess Cecilia, the daughter of Friedrich Franz III. of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. She entered Berlin on June 3rd, 1905, the day the letter was written.

XLVIII

Pillau 27/vii 1905

Dearest Nicky

On reaching the shores of my home[1] I take the earliest opportunity of sending you a line to once more thank you for the way in which you received me and the kindness shown to me by you. The hours I was allowed to spend in your society will be ever graven in my memory, you were like a dear brother to me. I shall allways respond to your feelings with the same warmth and with the same intensity as you and you can count on me as on a firm friend, who is filled with the sole wish and hope to see you successful in your heavy work, and your country soon recover from the severe test it has undergone through the will of Providence. The Alliance for mutual support in case of need, which we concluded will be of great use to Russia, as it will restore quiet in the minds of the people and confidence in the maintenance of Peace in Europe, and encourage financial circles in foreign countries to place funds in enterprises to open up Russia, and its vast stores of wealth yet untouched. In times to come may not be impossible that even Japan may

feel inclined to join it. This would cool down English selfassertion and impertinence, as she is her ally too. The 24th of July 1905 is a cornerstone in European politics and turns over a new leaf in the history of the world; which will be a chapter of Peace and goodwill among the great Powers of the European Continent, respecting each other in friendship, confidence, and in pursuing the general Policy on the lines of a community of interests. The moment the news of the new "groupement" will have become known in the world, the smaller nations, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway will all be attracted to this new great centre of gravity, by quite natural laws of the attraction of smaller bodies by the larger and compacter ones. They will revolve in the orbit of the great block of Powers (Russia, Germany, France, Austria, Italy) and feel confidence in leaning on and revolving around this mass. The Dual Alliance combining with the Triple Alliance gives a Quintupel Alliance, well, able to hold all unruly neighbors in order, and to impose Peace even by force, if there should be a Power hairbrained enough with to disturb it. In the conversation with that excellent man Birilew[2]—capital choice you made—I mentioned that when once your types of ships are decided upon, you ought to build them as many as possible at once, and not forget the German private firms, beside the French. Because they would work as for their own country, whereas other Powers would make use of the secrets of your build-

ers and engineers against yourself and country. Between Björkoe and Hochland I met my cruiser coming from Sweden, unshaven, unwashed and perfectly like a chimneysweep—a picture of woe—from the smoke of the Torpedoboat. I got some French news papers, in which I read a résume of the Brest Fêtes:[3] Il y à 12 ans nous avions Toulon et Cronstadt c'ètait le mariage d'amour. Comme chez tous les mariages d'amour est survenu un desillusionnement général surtout depuis la guerre 1904-05. Maintenanet nous avons Brest et Caves s'est le mariage d'affairs, et comme chez tous les mariages d'affairs il en résultera un mariage de raison![4] I think that really cool! for an Ally! to let her "ami et alliée" drop like that! It will do the French a world of good if you draw the reins a little tighter. Their 10 milliards of francs they placed in Russia of course hinder them from quite falling off, but the language shows to what a point the English flatteries have allready brought the French; and hope they wont go quite off their heads at Cowes. To use the metaphor of "mariage" again "Marianne" (France) must remember that she is wedded to you and that she is obliged to lie in bed with you, and eventually to give a hug or a kiss now and then to me, but not to sneak into the bedroom of the ever intriguing touche-â-tout on the Island.

Now good bye dearest Nicky: dont forget about Magnacharta (habeas corpus act) and the recompense for your line army in bringing it to a level

with the Guards! You promised it to me! Dont mind the ill homour of Wlad;[5] or the Guards opposition, remember the 10 army corps in the Field that bled for you, and those in the Provinces at home, who are daily fighting for you against the Revolution. Best love to Alix from your

most devoted friend

Willy

P. S. As you told me that Boulygine[6] had allready finished a bill after your directions, responding to the ideas I told you about, it would I think be urgent to *promulgate it now at once,* to let the members be chosen *as soon as possible* so that, when the conditions of Peace are submitted to you; you can communicate them to the *Russian People, who* would have to *bear* the RESPONSIBILITY of rejection or approval! This would shield you from a general attack on your policy from all sides if you did it *alone!*

NOTES

1. Returning from Bjoerkoe, the island off the coast of Sweden, where the Czar and the Kaiser had signed the historic secret treaty.
2. Russian Minister of the Navy.
3. On July 9th the British fleet visited Brest. In August the French returned the visit at Cowes.
4. For twelve years Toulon and Cronstadt were united in a marriage of love. As in all marriages of love, it was followed by general disillusionment, especially since the war of 1904-5.

Now Brest and Cowes are united in a business marriage and as in all business marriages, it will turn out to be a marriage of wisdom.

5. Grand Duke Vladimir.
6. Boulygine or Buligin was Russian Minister of the Interior in 1905. In acordance with instructions from the Czar, originating with the Kaiser's advice as outlined in the preceding letter, Buligin formulated a scheme for a "parliament." This body was to be advisory only, and when its nature was announced on June 26th, the "reform" provoked universal dissatisfaction in Russia. Two months later, August 19th, the Czar issued the manifesto establishing the Duma. Buligin was executed by a revolutionary tribunal in Soviet Russia in October, 1919.

XLIX

Schloss Wilhelmshohe, 22/viii 1905

Dearest Nicky

Your manifest directing the formation of the "Duma" made an excellent impression in Europe—especially—in my country, and I beg you to receive my warmest congratulations. It is a great step forward for the Political development of your country and gives the people an opening by which they will be able to bring before you their hopes and wishes, and enable a combined work of Master and Country for the Nations welfare. You will be able to take touch with all sorts of conditions of men and infuse into them directly your spirit and your ideas, which was formerly hindered by the great bulky wall of the "Tchin"[1] bureaucracy regarded with much suspicion by your subjects. Excuse my telegram the other day but I thought it might be a good idea to try the "mettle" of the "Duma" and to see wether it is workable or not. In the same time you get an excellent insight into the mind of your People and make them carry a part of the responsibility for the future, which it would have probably liked to saddle

solely upon you, thereby making a wholesale "critique" and dissatisfaction with deeds done by *you alone* impossible.

I send you enclosed some interesting articles showing the tendency of the thoughts of France. The British have prostituted themselves before France and the French sailors in the hopes of gaining them over from you, and stopping any "rapprochement" between you, me and them. The French felt much flattered, but I hope the sensible people have kept their heads cool and clear and seen, that all is "consu de fil blanc", and that Britain only wants to make France her "catspaw" against us, as she used Japan against you. The article in the "Forum" is written by Maurice Low, the correspondent of the "Morning Post" sent to America. It is cleverly written and most indiscret about the extension of the new Anglo-Japanese treaty which was kept quite secret in London till now, but he seems to have let the "cat out of the bag." The "Arch intriguer—and mischiefmaker" in Europe as you rightly called the King of England has been hard at work in the last months. At Cowes he said to one of my friends—a German gentleman I sent to observe the "Entente Cordiale"—"I cant find out what has been going on at Bjoerkoe! Benckendorff[2] knows nothing—*for he always tells me everything*—Copenhagen knows nothing and even the *Emperors mother—who always lets me know everything*—has heard nothing

from her son this time; even Lambsdorff—who is *such a nice man and lets me know all I want to hear* —knows nothing or at least wont tell! It is very disagreeable!" This shows you how very wide is the net of secret information he has cast over Europe and over you. He first let his Press launch the idea of a visit to me, and when all the papers of Europe had taken it up and talked it over, suddenly published an insulting dementi, declaring *my Foreign Office* had started the idea. The finest lie I ever came across! After this he goes and invites my son behind my back to come and visit him in England! I have of course stopped that business. His fleet is in the act of visiting our shores and I think this will open the eyes of many Germans who are still loth to vote money for an extension of our Fleet; we shall send many down by rail and steamer to take an object lesson. They will I hope learn to understand the necessity of building a strong fleet. The enclosed brochure[3] was sent me from America, I enclose it, as I think it may interest you, especially from the point of view of the future plans England has vis-à-vis of Russia in Asia and what she is trying to use the Japanese for. It throws light on the Japanese expedition to the Turkestan frontier I told you about.

Your most aff. Cousin and Friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Office-holding.
2. The Russian ambassador in London.
3. The pamphlet in question was not attached to the original letters kept in Moscow.

L

CRONBERG 24/VIII 1905

To-day 4 weeks ago "Bjoerkoe"! The delightful hours we spent together! And the lasting bonds of unity of friendship which will bring fruits of good to our countries, so God will. I just got your kind long telegram! So many thanks; most kind to take so much trouble. I quite understand your position and resolutions! As soon as you are sure of your People backing you up, and they are ready for further fighting then all is right, and wish you Heavens help and a speedy victory. I am on a visit to my sisters here, who just returned from a long stay in England. They tell me the news of our meeting at Bjoerkoe threw all the people there and the press into the state of wildest excitement. The King and the Court before all were quite "aus dem Häuschen",[1] he trying to find out from my sisters whether they know anything of what was going on! They laughed him in the face of course, and were much amused.

The extract from the letter of Bismarck to Schleinitz[2] from Russia in 1858 will interest you as it shows that history repeats itself and the times were very like what they are now. I saw Granduke

Georg today with Minny of Greece, he told me his news from private source were that the publication of the "Duma" had created great satisfaction in Russian provincial circles; and that sympathy for Germany and acknowledgement for our behaviour to Russia during the war were warm and lively. My sisters and Tino[3] and all the family send you their very best love! Dont forget the order ranking the "advancement" of the line equal to the Guard. It will answer splendidly! I enclose some new post-cards of the Saalburg I visited today, it is nearly finished and looks lovely in the fine summer weather.

Now Good bye my dear Nicky, God help you and protect you and all your family my prayers will always follow you as from you

most devoted and aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

25/VIII

P. S. Just when I had finished my letter I got a message from President Roosevelt.[4] Knowing my interest in the Peace Conference he kindly sent me information of the situation and of the points at issue upon which there is a difference of opinion between Japan and Russia, and his proposals for meeting the wishes of both belligerents as far as it is possible. I think his proposals most sensible and practical and hope that they may come up to your expectations. As far as I can make out they seem

to secure to Russia all the advantages of an honourable Peace. But of course it is for you solely to decide, as you are best able to judge of the feeling of your countrymen. Once more I beg your pardon for being such an awful bore and bothering you, but you know that it all comes from a friendly heart, which beats warmly for you and your welfare as well as that of your country.

I have ordered my fleet to shadow the British and when they have anchored to lay themselves near the British Fleet to give them a dinner and make them as drunk as possible to find out what they are about; and then sail off again! I think the astonishment will be great as the English as well as our people believe that our fleet will be in the North Sea! So dont tell anybody for the secret must be well kept! Tata! this is the real end of my epistle!

Willy

The following is a translation of the extracts of Bismarck's letter to the German Secretary of State, von Schleinitz, appended by the Kaiser to his foregoing letter:

"Following the announcement of the agrarian reforms, every one in Russia who does not make his living exclusively by holding office demands and expects some tangible form of participation by the people and especially by the higher social strata in

the government of the country; the masses are temperate, but one hears voices reminding one of the "Convention" and which have already outdistanced the viewpoint of the Girondists. One traces the activity of agitators who neglect no method for spreading calumnies against the court and the imperial house, even among the lowest social strata. The intimate circle of the Czar is unfortunately not free from elements offering opportunities for the worst of such (charges) and whose acts as well as responsibility for the whole Augean stable of official blunders are cleverly blamed on the Czar, whose kindly heart without doubt is too indulgent toward many persons known to him, and whose honest efforts for the improvement of things are even recognized by those who criticize him for the failure of these efforts. The poor people, even the common soldiers, it is said, are told stories of the money expended at the court, the retainers of the grand dukes, the purchase of houses for the youngest sons of the Czar, the corruption at court, and this is compared with their poverty. Persons in high places, through office and birth, speak to me of revolutions as of things possible, but affecting them little personally, and touching the Czar alone, so that in no case does it appear that they think of sacrificing their lives in the defence of the throne. Indeed, at all times here people have made up by sharp criticism in conversation for the deference which they show to governmental authority in practical life; but in former times

the European atmosphere was not so unfavorable for monarchical authority as today and especially as it has been in Russia for the last four years. Perhaps it will pass like an intermittent fever, yet it is possible perhaps some little stray spark may yet start a great conflagration here. One hears officers complaining about the laxity of discipline among the soldiers and war is considered necessary if bad morale is to be avoided. All over the world things look ominous and when it has come to such a pass that nobles outwardly of calm and peaceable temperament buy up whole shipments of revolvers and munitions in order to be prepared for the summer, I do not know if it were not better to be a Christian dog in Damascus than a gentleman in the land of Czar Nicholas. The prospects of the Germans in North Schleswig are at any rate less uncomfortable than those of the Russian land junker who padded with revolvers goes among his peasants like a living infernal machine. The Czar is depressed by the seriousness of the internal situation and has not the same interest as ordinarily for foreign politics. He said to me yesterday with deep sighs that Wednesdays are for him the only happy days, because then his duties give him 24 hours of rest. It is because every Tuesday evening he goes on a hunt. Also at my recent audience he was downcast; he presented me with photographs of himself and the august Czarina and appended to them a description of the originals of all the family portraits hanging in the

room. If words were fatal, not a male of the entire house of Hollstein-Gottorp would still be alive. Everyone does justice to the noble heart of the Czar, but the "buts" which follow depends upon my coming at the opportune moment, or to beg for a change in the subject of the conversation. It is very unfortunate that the Czar is made responsible for all the various and far-fetched misdeeds associated with the name of Minna Iwanowna, in German Frau von Burghof, friend of the old Adlerberg. That guard officers should discuss in the presence of strangers the question whether or not to fire on the people, Czar Nicholas surely did not expect so soon. The police system here, dating from olden times, has been so good, that the Czar was bound to learn too much of all these things, and the practical chief of this institution, Timaschew, sees everything in the near future as extremely gloomy."

NOTES

1. Put out.
2. The letter of Bismarck's was not written in 1858, as the Kaiser claims, but on November 30th, 1860.
3. Crown Prince Constantin, later King, of Greece.
4. The Russo-Japanese peace agreement was reached at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on August 29th, five days after this letter was written, and the treaty was signed on September 5th.

LI

Rominten 26/ix 1905

Dearest Nicky

Witte's visit[1] gives me the agreeable opportunity to send you a few words. This allways affords me great pleasure and I only trust that the letter may not bore you too much. I had most interesting conversations with Witte. He has impressed me as a man of uncommon pespicacity and foresight and a rare gift of energy. He has managed to turn—with Rooseveldt's equally energetic and clever help—the Portsmouth Conference to a very good end. So much so, that in the rest of the world it is regarded as a signal and effective victory of Russia over Japan. This may be of interest to you, because doubtless enemies of his and invidious people in Russia, may wish to detract from his work, and make believe that he has not safeguarded his country's interests as he ought to. Great men—and he must be I believe counted among them—will ever have to face a certain amount of envy and lies which counterbalance the share of praise lavished on them by their admirers. But it is the facts that speak for them, and Portsmouth speaks for itself.

I found to my great satisfaction that his political ideas fully coincide with the base upon which we rested our views exchanged at Björkoe. He is a firm advocate of a Russo-German-France Alliance which as he tells me will be gladly "cotaoygé"[2] by Amerika—for the maintenance of the Peace and statu quo in the world, the balance of which has been disturbed by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.[3] He was consequently very agreeable surprised when I told him of our work at Björkoe. It is the grouping of Powers which is the most natural—they beeing the representants of the "Continent"—and will have the consequence of drawing all the other lesser Powers in Europe into the orbit of this great block. Amerika will stand on the side of this "Combination." Firstly from the "Racial" point of view, they are decidedly "White" anti "Yellow." Secondly politically, from fear of Japan on account of the Philippines upon which the Japanese have cast longing eyes, their loss would impair the American position in the pacific. Thirdly from the dangerous competition of the Japanese trade sustained by very cheap labour and without the cost of long transport with its tariffs for freight and for the passage of the Suez Canal. The sums to be paid for its passage beeing a heavy tax on the whole *European* commerce. The same thing will be with the "Panama Canal."

The "Continental Combine" flanked by America is the sole and only manner to effectively block the

way to the whole world becoming John Bull's private property, which he exploits at his hearts contents after having, by lies and intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilized nations by earh others ears for his own personal benefit. We see this pernicious principle at work now in the Marocco question,[4] in which John Bull is equally doing his best to set the French dead against us. Thereby causing endless delay and trouble. But your Allies are so hypnotized by "Cowes" and "Brest" and the "Entente Cordiale" that scarcely do anything in Foreign Politics without consulting London first! I think it would be a good thing if you would have Nelidoff[5] advised to put a stop to this Anglomania and to remind the French that their future lies with you and us; for I hear that he is also somewhat "anglomane" Witte kindly gave the French advice about Marocco to take reason and I have ordered Radolin[6] to be as "conciliant" as possible, so that I hope that we shall come to terms in a few days.

With regard to the Anglo-French "Entente Cordiale" you may perhaps find in my letters to you from two years ago, where I warn you of the beginning "Rapprochement" of the two Governments and countries; when they commonly opposed your policy in Macedonia after the "Müerzsteg Punctations." I then showed that they were resuming their old former Policy of the "Crimean" and called them the "Crimean Combination." The *Liberal* "Western Powers" have combined as I predicted; and are not

only opposing you in foreign Policy, but more hotly and open on the field of internal Russian policy. The French and English Liberal Press quite openly and in conjunction denounce all monarchical and energetic actions in Russia—the "Zardom" as they call it—and openly espouse the cause of the Revolutionaries for the expansion and maintenance of liberalism and "enlightement" against the "Zardom" and "Imperialism" of "certain" backward countries. That is yours and mine. The phrase by which the French are allways recaught by England is "to uphold in common the interests of Liberalism in the world and to propagate it in other countries." That means to foster and help revolutions all over Europe especially in countries which are happily not yet under the absolute dominations of those infernal parliaments.

Alvensleben[7] who is on leave at home is I am sorry to say quite broken down in health and has begged to be allowed to resign and leave the service. With your kind approval I propose to send your court H. v. Schoen[8] Minister at Copenhagen. He was formerly a long time in Paris, is married to an elegant and most charming wife; he accompanied me on my journey to Tangiers and the Mediterranean this year and is a loyal quiet discret man; a personal friend of mine having my fullest confidence since many years. He is well acquainted with all the English intrigues in Denmark, many of which he was able to counteract. He knows Italy

well, speaks french, italian, english like his mother-tongue; is most active and a good lawn-tennis player, in case you should need one.

The visit of the British Fleet at Swinemünde and Danzig went off without collisions. The Public was civil and "hospitalier" but without enthousiasm. At Esbjerg I had one of my friends who speaks Danish and english well. He went on board the ships disguised as a coal merchant and frequently dined or lunched with the officers. They told him that they were sent to the Baltic to show the Emperors, that they had no power whatever to decide anything as they pleased, for the British Fleet would never allow them to!!! A fine piece of impudence! May your fleet soon lay again on the waters in fine ships of new types commanded by able bodied and clear minded officers and well trained men.

A piece of news that will amuse you come from Vienne a few days ago. The American Ambassador Mr. Bellamy Storer[9] told a friend of mine that he had been with King of England at Marienbad a few days before the conclusion of peace the King told Storer that there was no idea of Peace as Japan would never be allowed to give up the demand for indemnity, which was due to it as Victor. He then went on saying that it was necessary that Russia should be and remain financially helpless and crippled for a long time. Storer said he was in a very awkward position as the King asked his advice on the promenade loudly before a large number of

people who were accompanying him and who were listening!! It seems he is afraid Amerika will join the other Nations in giving Russia money, when a great loan is internationally issued; and wanted to influence Storer to report home to that effect; which he of course refused to do.

Now the Peace beeing signed and the ratifications even to be exchanged would not you think it practically, if we two instruct our ambassadors at foreign courts identically without letting them into the secret of the existence of a treaty—that in all matters not specially affecting our countries in their own interest, but in all questions of general policy our ambassadors are to work together and inform each other of their instructions and ideas. This common exposal of a common cause, will not fail to impress the world that our relations have become closer and thus slowly prepare your Allies the French, for the new orientation which their policy must take for the entry into our treaty. The Marocco question will be settled in a few days,—Witte having talked sense and given good advice to both sides, and I have instructed to be as "coulant" as possible. Witte has charmed all the ladies and Gentlemen here by his amusing stories about America and his experiences which will greatly amuse you too! Now goodbye dearest Nicky, love to Alix a kiss to the boy from Ever your most devoted

friend and cousin *Willy*

NOTES

1. Count Sergei Witte was chief Russian envoy at the Portsmouth peace conference. On his way home from America he stopped at Paris, and while there was requested from Petrograd to go on to Rominten at the Kaiser's suggestion. He arrived there the day this letter was written, and left on the day following.
2. "Côtoyé" probably, meaning "followed."
3. The treaty between England and Japan, signed January 30th, 1902, and due to expire in 1907, was expanded in its scope and signed on August 12th, 1905.
4. The Franco-German agreement, embodying the program for the conference later held at Algeciras, was signed two days after this letter was written.
5. Alexander I. Nelidoff was Russian ambassador to France from 1903 until his death in 1910. He played a considerable part in settling the Dogger Bank incident in the Russo-Japanese War.
6. Prince Hugo de Radolin was German ambassador in Paris at this time.
7. Count Friedrich Johann Alvensleben, German ambassador at Petrograd, 1901-1905.
8. Baron W. von Schoen, German Minister at Copenhagen from 1900 to 1905, was appointed German ambassador to Russia in the latter year. In 1910 he became ambassador in Paris.
9. Formerly American Minister to Belgium and Spain, American Ambassador to Austria-Hungary, 1902-1906.

LII

Neues Palais 8/xi 1905

Dearest Nicky

The Chancellor, to whom I read some parts of your letter, told me that our purely defensive agreement cannot possibly clash with the French treaty concluded by your Father. For if it did, the meaning would be, that by the French treaty Russia is bound to support France even in a *war of aggression* against Germany! But such a contingency i.e. Russia supporting France in an *aggressive* policy *against us,* we never till now looked upon as deserving even a moments consideration; because your dear father often told me he would at all times set his face openly against any war of aggression. Besides beeing on the most friendly and intimate terms with me. This is illustrated by the fact that in 1891 during the maneuvres near Narva, he openly expressed to me his aversion to the French Republican system, advocating the restoration of Monarchy in Paris, for which undertaking he begged me to help him. If your French agreement is like ours purely defensive, then there is no incompatibility between

the two, one does not exclude the other, so that no further declaration is required.

On the other hand I can understand that it may be opportune for you, not to publicly proclaim yourself as ally, at the moment when the international revolutionists are spreading broadcast over the world the infamous lie of my having tried to influence you in favour of reaction.

My fervent wish is that you may pass unharmed through the present crisis, and that your people may fully grasp your noble intentions. Now you must wait and see how the institutions you called into life work practically; only after this it will later on be possible to judge wether and how modifications would be required.

As for your opinion of Witte, I of course cannot pretend to know him as well as you do, but he certainly impressed me as a man above the average. At the same time I am glad you took your uncle Nicolas Nicolaiewitsch[1] into your confidence. He appears to me as representing an element of firmness; and firmness may be necessary to maintain order. Without orders young liberty cannot live.

With regard to Tattenbach[2] and Morokko your French information is incorrect. I do not aim nor ever aimed at any special advantage for Germany, and Tattenbach never advocated any Policy of his own. This is a thing unheard of in my service, my representatives in foreign countries only advocating one policy and that is mine! We only wish to se-

cure the open Door, that is an interest we have in common with all the other seafaring and trading nations. There is no reason whatever why an equitable arrangement with France should not be arrived at on that ground. I trust that you whose permanent aim is to promote peace between all nations and goodwill all over the civilized world, will lend your powerful help to bring the Conference to a general understanding, based on the maintenance of the open Door. A word in this direction to your representative at the Conference would be most advantageous in lightening the task of my minister. With best love to Alix and the baby believe me dear Nicky ever your

Willy

NOTES

1. It was believed that the Grand Duke, who later commanded the Rússian Armies in the Great War, was the influence that was mainly responsible for the annulment of the secret treaty concluded by the Kaiser and Czar at Bjoerkoe.
2. Count de Tattenbach was on a special mission to the Sultan of Fez to secure special privileges for Germany in Morocco.

LIII

Neues Palais 30/xii 1905

Dearest Nicky

General Tatischeff[1] has given me your letter and presented himself in his new "charge." It is of the highest importance for me to know that he enjoys your full confidence, and I will "le cas echéeant" with pleasure avail myself of his services in my private relations with you. He is welcome here and in the ranks of my headquarters, to which he now belongs.

The new ambassador von Shoen is leaving today with Gen. v. Jacobi.[2] I can vouch for the General's character in every way. He was my first adjutant I ever had, studied with me at Bonn, served in the 1st Guards with the 1st Batallion; later on for a second time became my aide de camp after I came to the throne, spent several years as milit. attache at Rome and finally commanded Mama's Regiment at Wiesbaden, where you saw him. I am sure that he is as worthy of your confidence as he commands mine, who knows him intimately since 25 years! Best thanks for your kind letter and your wishes for New Year, which I heartily reciprocate. May

God bless and protect you and your family and grant Peace to your People this is the earnest wish of

Ever your devoted and aff-ate cousin, friend and ally
Willy

NOTES

1. Count Ivan D. Tatischeff, the Czar's military representative attached to the person of the Kaiser.
2. General F. W. L. Albano von Jacobi, a member of the Kaiser's suite, was at this time Minister Plenipotentiary at the Russian Emperor's Court, with a residence at Petrograd.

LIV

BERLIN 29/1 1906

Dearest Nicky

General v. Jacobi brought me your letter and wishes for which best thanks. He was most happy at the kind reception he met at your hands as well as in society, I am glad to hear from him that you are quite well as also are Alix and the children. He was most impressed by the good looks and "tenue" the Regiments showed, which were inspected by you, at which ceremony he was allowed to assist. But he was very sorry he cut such a miserable figure at the shooting party, not having his own guns, and beeing only an indifferent marksman.

The idea of a swaggering "aide-de-camp" from our "Collegue" the woodcutters von Fallieres[1] following about in your "suite" caused me unlimited amusement. But besides being awfully funny it is in some respects at least also a useful idea. The more closely France is drawn over to you—provided it succeeds—the more it gets out of mischief. The Moroccan business[2] will as far as I can see come out all right without war. The decisive point is that hitherto no other Power has shown any disposition

for eventually lending France armed support, in case she wants to invade Morocco. Without the certainty of armed support France is not likely to risk such an invasion. Some arrangement will ultimately be agreed upon ensuring Peace for all the parties concerned with honour assuring at the same time for the trade of the whole world the maintenance of the open Door in Morocco. That the French refused a loan to Russia now,[3] has not so much to do with the Moroccan Affair, as she has much calmed down since the opening of the Conference of Algesiras, but to the reports of the Jews from Russia —who are the leaders of the Revolt[4]—to their kinsmen in France who have the whole Press under their nefarious influence. Berlin is quite full of Russians and noble families fled from the Baltic Provinces. Over 50,000 of your subjects are here. 20,000 about at Königsberg and other thousands in the small Provincial towns of Prussia, Posen and Silesia. Especially the Nobles from the Baltic Provinces are in dire distress, having lost all their castles burnt and their properties pillaged and their forests partly destroyed. Many a baroness has gone in for simple housekeeping in other families, and young comtesses and baronesses have had to enter "Magazins" as simple shopgirls, only to save themselves and their mothers from starving!! Our great landed proprietors have volunteered to harbour some families in their country houses, and even the Empress has taken girls into her seminary to relieve the poor

mothers! You have no idea of the terrible loss and distress reigning in the best of your Courland and Livland Nobility. As many of my officers serving in the army have married young ladies from these families, receiving their main means of subsistence from their parents-in-law these poor fellows are also suddenly placed vis-a-vis de rien, as they cannot live on their pay. To my opinion many millions will be necessary for reestablishing these poor people and helping to rebuild their destroyed homes, which sums I trust your Government will readily place at their disposal; an order from you to that effect would make an excellent impression in the whole of Europe, and rally the dropping spirits of these lamentable people.

While I am writing these lines I just receive the sudden and quite unexpected news of your dear grandfathers death.[5] What a noble ideal and chivalrous monarch has passed away! Beloved by his family and his subjects who looked upon him as their father! I deeply sympathize with you in this great loss, which we monarchs all feel and deplore, as we have lost one of our best among us! Your poor mother will be in an awful distress, but thankful that she was there to spend the last moments with her adored father! I of course intend going to the funeral.

General Saionzkowsky[6] was presented to me and made an excellent impression upon me; I was glad to be able to congratulate him on the brilliant achieve-

ments of my brave Regiment of Viborg, that fought so gallantly for its Emperor and Country.

Now goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to Alix and the children from

Your aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

NOTES

1. Fallières had a fortnight before been elected President of France. The Kaiser's "woodcutters" joke is not clear.
2. The conference at Algeciras had opened on January 16th, under the Presidency of the Duke of Almodovar.
3. The new Russian loan of 800,000,000 francs proposed at the moment, was rejected by the French Government, but the French banks were willing to advance funds to strengthen the gold reserve of the Imperial Bank.
4. The revolutionary outbreaks in the Baltic Provinces in the fall of 1905.
5. King Christian IX. of Denmark died this day. He was the father of the Czar's mother.
6. In the Russo-Japanese War he commanded the 85th Viborg Infantry Regiment, of which the Kaiser was Honorary Colonel.

LV

BERLIN 6/III 1906

Dearest Nicky

The return of General à la suite v. Jacobi to Tsarskoe gives me the opportunity of sending these lines through him. They are to express my sincerest and heartfelt thanks for your kind wishes for our silver wedding[1] and for the splendid present you kindly sent us both. They are really most splendid! Lovely in colour and exquisite in workmanship; the chiffres in precious stones making an excellent set off on the soft dark green of the stone. They attracted great attension among our guests and were duly admired. It was most kind of you to think of our old wedding and to take part in our festivities like this. I was most pleased to salute all the deputations you sent me. Especially my brave "Viborgs" were the centre of admirative curiosity; they made a very good impression everywhere and were "fêted" as much as possible. The festivities were most tiring and exerting, but happily Victoria got through pretty well after just having had a sharp attack of influence. Since 3 days we have perfect summer here and everybody is out on horseback and

on foot, auto or cycle even hundreds are to be seen sitting in the gardens and on the terraces of the "cafes" drinking their coffee or bier out of doors! I suppose this warm weather will soon reach you too! With best love to Alix and the babies and once more thanking you for your lovely gift,

I remain
Ever your most devoted and aff-ate Friend and cousin

Willy

NOTE

1. The Kaiser was married on February 27th, 1881, to Augusta-Victoria, Princess of Slesvig-Holstein. With their silver wedding was celebrated the marriage of their second son, Prince Eitel Friedrich, to the Duchess Sophie Charlotte of Oldenburg.

LVI

Neues Palais 14/vi 1906

Dearest Nicky

Sincerest thanks for your kind letters Tatischeff brought me and the second one Wladimir gave me today. I fully sympathize with you in these difficult times. The best way to relieve the cares and worries the situation at home causes you, is as you do, to occupy yourself with your fine Guard by inspecting them and speaking to them. It gives you pleasure and gratifies the troops, who will in no doubt in serious moments, acknowledge the interest you show them, by proving a loyal, trustworthy and keen weapon in the hand of their sovereign! I am glad your Hussars satisfied you, who served in their ranks! It is the same with me here; as I also have a "penchant" for my Guarde Hussars, whom I commande for a time. I review them yesterday, before maneuvering the Guards Cavalry Division, which was most successful, but like all inspections this year ended in a heavy shower.

I quite agree with your views on the Anarchist question. The attempt[1] was dastardly and fuiendish. The difficulty to cope with this pest of Man-

kind is, as you rightly observe that in some countries —before all in England—these beasts may live undisturbed and there to plot against the lives of anybody. I am informed that the Spanish Prime Minisited had charged the Prince of Wales to express the wish of the Spanish nation to H. M. the King Edward VII, that it was deemed necessary he should cause his Government to join the Continental Powers in the serious repression of this murderous sect.

This occurence shows that the arrangements made by our two Governments for the control of these fellows, have completely miscarried. Because they can live with absolute impunity in London, and there mature there murderous designs. The right place for these fuiends is the scaffold, sometimes the imprisonment for life in a lunatic asylum. All Continental Powers should send London a joint invitation to ask the English Government to join them by an International agreement to fight these beasts. I should think that it would be possible, by a common consent, in the defence of life and culture to legally place the fabrication of chemicals for the the filling and use of bombs under capital punishment. The Duma[2] creates most difficult situations for your Government and the circumstances are most trying. But one must hope that after a time, both will manage to find means and ways to come to a reasonable modus vivendi, so that positive work may be done for the welfare of the country.

As I expected your choice fell on Iswolsky,[3] who

will I am sure satisfy you, as a most clever man he will easily guide the course of Russian Foreign politics, along peaceful lines according to your wish. He gave a very sensible answer to Schoen in the Bagdad Railway[4] question so that I hope my Government will be able to continue working with him on the base of mutual confidence arising out of the community of interests. Our interests in this Railway are purely economic and commercial for the welfare of mankind. It represents a concession in full legal form to a German Company, who is building and running it. I can well imagine that the English are, as you say fiddling around you, about Asia.[5] But as you have decided calmly to await their proposals, it is sure that, if their terms about Central Asia seems acceptable to you, an understanding with them would remove many elements of friction and conflict which would also give me satisfaction.

No doubt everybody will understand that the actual moment chosen by the English Fleet to pay their self-invited visit must be most irritating and inopportune to you and your country, and I am fully convinced of your feelings of indignation about it from my feelings about the visit to us last year. They will certainly try to strengthen the backs of your ultra liberal party. The fleet on their return journey have announced their visit to Pillau and Travemünde. I shall have them closely watched.

Like you I look forward with great pleasure to

our meeting in the end of Summer. As I shall be back in the Baltic in the first days of August I thought to propose to you to meet on the 1 of August—new style—if the weather is fine in the roads of Heringsdorf off Swinemünde. The place is very pretty and the communication with the shore for dispatches etc. much easier than at Hela.

The kind old Emperor Francis Joseph[6] I went to see, was still remarkably fresh, though age has bent him a little; he also was much irritated at the behaviour of his parliament. The hours I spent with him were most agreeable through his warm hearted kindness and chivalry.

I visited a most interesting old—restored—castle Kreuzenstein[7] belonging to the celebrated explorer Count Wilzeck. It is a marvel of Gottick architecture and furniture from the 13th and 15th century most harmonious and instructive.

Tatischeff will tell you of my inspection this spring and the maneuvers of 2nd Brigade showing the new "Reglement" for the 1st time, as well as the evolutions of the Guards Cavalry Division under my command, which went off exceedingly well. Wladimir was here and gave me your kind lines, which, as Colonel of the Viborgs made me feel very proud. I once more thank you for the great kindness you showed them, and the honour you gave them by inspecting them; they fully deserved it as they behaved most gallantly. Wladimir also accompanied us to a great cattle show near Berlin

and seemed highly amused at the production of prize cows, bulls, pigs, horses, etc., that made a great noise; the thousands of peasants and small proprietors were most jubilant in their loyal demonstrations. Most astonishing progress was shown in the departments of the Electric and Alcoholic motors, as well as the alcoholic gas lamps for the use of the landed proprietors. Now good bye dearest Nicky, God bless and protect you, best love to Alix, and "au revoir" at Swinemünde, where we shall try to be a merry company.

Ever your most aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

NOTES

1. On May 31st, while the King and Queen of Spain were returning from their wedding in the Church of San Jeronimo el Real in Madrid, a bomb was thrown at the royal coach.
2. The Duma had been opened on May 10th, on the eve of which Count Witte's resignation was announced. The first Duma's life was stormy from the beginning. It was soon dissolved.
3. Iswolsky became Minister of Foreign Affairs.
4. This project which had been marking time since October, 1904, now began to move forward again.
5. Great Britain and Russia were through their representatives discussing the interests of the two countries in Asia, so as to pave the way for the coming Triple Alliance.
6. The Kaiser on June 6th arrived in Vienna on a short visit to the Emperor Francis-Joseph at Schönbrunn.
7. The castle had been turned practically into a museum of Fifteenth Century arms and armor.

LVII

1/II 1907

Dearest Nicky

Hintze[1] is about to leave and this affords me the opportunity of sending you these lines through him. My warmest wishes accompany you in the New Year hoping that your steady work for your country and the welfare of the people may succeed in calming the minds heated by discussion and mislead by unwarrantable agitation I hope that, if wiser counsels prevail with your subjects this year, and they behave themselves we shall be able to meet on the "waters" somewhere and that Henry[2] will be happy to show you the Fleet under his Flag. I think you will find a certain progress in its development since 1901 near Danzig old types having been eliminated and new ones added so as to render the whole fleet more homogenous.

With best love to Alix and the Children, whose photos pleased me immensely, specially of the boy and wishing you Gods blessing believe me dear Nicky

Ever your most aff-ate cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Captain von Hintze was a member of the Kaiser's suite, attached to the person of the Czar.
2. Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser's brother, had been appointed in September, 1906, to the chief command of the German battle-fleet.

LVIII

28/XII 1907

Dearest Nicky

With all my heart warmest wishes for 1908. God bless and protect you Alix and the children. Let me hope of having the pleasure of meeting you again. By my visit to England[1] I think I have removed many courses of misunderstanding and of distrust, so that the atmosphere is cleared and the pressure on the safety valve relieved. As a piece of news only *quite private and confidential* for YOU PERSONALLY, I found the British people very nervous about the Japanese whom they begin to fear and mistrust. The sailing of the American Pacific fleet has angered London highly as they tried everything in their power to hinder it. London is afraid of an encounter between Japan and America, because they must take sides with one of them, as it will be a question of Race, not of Politiks, only *Yellow* versus *White*. The dropping of Japan would immediately entail the loss of India; which the Japanese are quietly undermining, revolutionizing etc. The Japanese have foreseen this devolpment and are preparing for it. *Perhaps* they will *first* attack

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COMRADES IN AUTOCRACY

This picture, taken on one of the Czar's last visits to the Kaiser in Germany, gives an extremely interesting and accurate facial character study of the two ill-fated monarchs.

India and leave Philippines alone. British Naval and Army officers spoke openly to me and my officers of their disgust at the "Yellow" alliance with Japan, whom they hate. In this state of feelings judge what an effect Count Okumas speech[2] a few days ago has made! The action is that of a Shimose shell in London! Now their newspapers have for the first time used the term "Yellow Peril" from *my picture*, which is coming true. A German Gentleman just back from Mexico reported to me having himself counted 10,000 Japanese men in the plantations in South Mexico, all in Military Jackets with brass buttons. After work at sundown they all assemble under sergeants and officers who are disguised as simple labourers, in squads and detachments and drill and exercise with staffs of wood, which he observed very often, when they thought they were unobserved. They are Japanese reservists who have hidden arms with them, and intended as army corps to seize the Panama Canal and to cut off communication on land with America. It is not impossible that England will have to send out a squadron to the Pacific, which they are very loth to do. Meanwhile American and British Journalists are having a little friendly nosepulling among each other, which shows the nervousness of the London Press. This is my *secret* information for YOU PERSONALLY, so that you may have time to arrange for your plans, it is sure information and good, as you well know by now that I never gave you wrong one.

The main point is to have ones eyes open and be prepared. The development may be slow, yet incidents may create an unexpected and sudden outburst before the question has ripened, as will sometimes happen. It is imposing to observe how well the Japanese prepare themselves for an emergency! They are going in for the whole of Asia, carefully preparing their blows and against the *white Race in general!* Remember my picture, its coming true! If France sides with England in this affair, Saigon and Annam are gone!

Willy

NOTES

1. The Kaiser visited the King of England in the beginning of November, 1907.
2. The speech of Count Okuma, the Japanese Prime Minister, contained a reference to the 300,000,000 inhabitants of India looking toward Japan for aid in their emancipation from European rule.

LIX

WILHELMSHÖHE 18/VIII 08

Dearest Nicky

Will you kindly do me the favour of kindly accepting the first proofs of my photos in the new Russian uniforms. They have not yet been published, and I hope your scrutinizing eye would find any faults with the turn out. Uncle Betrie[1] was all sunshine at Cronberg and in very good humour. He intends visiting Berlin officially with Aunt Alix[2] next year, date to be fixed. He also talked about Turkey, giving to understand that she was best left alone, to organize herself, and to reform Macedonia herself, so that the Powers were able for the time to drop the projected reforms, which seemes to relieve him visibly.

I hope your trip is favoured by good weather, whilst we have incessant pouring rain here, with best love to Alix

Ever your aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

NOTES

1. King Edward met the Kaiser on August 11th in Cronberg.
2. Queen Alexandra.

LX

HUBERTUSSTOCK 8/1 09

Dearest Nicky

Many thanks for your kind letter of Dec. 25th which you sent me through Tatischeff. I was much pleased to hear from you, and my wife and I both thank you most sincerely for your kind wishes for the New year. You are quite right in saying that the old year was an eventful one. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegowina[1] was a genuine surprise for everybody, but particularly so for us as we were informed about Austrias intentions even later than you. I think it my duty to draw your attention to this, considering that Germany has been accused of having pushed Austria to take this step. This allegation is absurd and as untrue as it was in the case of the Sanjack Railway. I am glad to see by your letter that people in Russia begin to realise this now.

The fact is that once Austria had taken this step without previously consulting us hesitation as to the course we had to follow as loyal allies was out of the question. We could not side with her oppon-

ents. You will be the first to approve of this loyalty of ours.

But this does not mean that we intend to drop our old friendly relations with Russia. I am even more firmly convinced than ever, that Germany and Russia should be as closely united as possible; their union would form a powerful stronghold for the maintenance of Peace and of monarchical institutions. You know my views in that respect that my friendship is loyal and sincere I was able to prove to you by facts; when during the period of adversities Russia had to pass through recently I took grave responsibility on myself for your sake.

Valuing as I do friendly relations between our two countries I consider it all the more important, that whatever might injure them should be removed. You wont I hope mind my telling you quite frankly what I think on that subject. Recently we have been represented as resenting and showing uneasiness about your agreement with England concerning Central Asia. The same rumours are circulated about the visit Uncle Bertie paid to you at Reval.[2] All nonsense! We understand perfectly that Russia for the present must avoid getting into a conflict with Great Britain, and that for this reason she is bent on smoothing away actual points of controversy.

Apart from this you have repeatedly given me the formal assurance, that you would not enter upon any agreement with England of a more general nature. I have your word what else should I require?

We are quite as anxious as you to improve our relations with England. I am looking forward to the visit Uncle Bertie is going to pay me next month in Berlin not only because I am gratified to have him and Aunt Alix over here, but also because I expect the visit to have useful results for the Peace of the World.

No my dear Nicky neither your agreement with England about Central Asia nor your meeting at Reval has produced any uneasiness or disappointment in Germany! The cause is quite a different one. It is the patent fact that for the last two years Russian Policy has been gradually drawing away from us more and more, evolving always closer toward a combination of powers unfriendly to us. The Triple Entente between France-Russia and England is beeing talked of by the whole world as an accomplished fact. English and French papers miss no opportunity of representing this alleged Triple entente as being directed against Germany, and only too often the Russian Press chimes in joining the chorus. On the other hand in many cases of late Russian policy has shown mistrust in German policy, for instance in Persia and China, a mistrust entirely unwarranted. As for other questions in which we are interested, such as the Bagdad Railway, were we expected to count on Russia, she in her policy gave us a wide berth. It is surprising consequently that a certain estrangement should have grown up between our two countries?

I need not assure you that all these questions impress me very keenly, and I think it my duty to draw your attention to the situation as it really is and to the reasons which lead up to it before it be too late.

The tendency of Russian policy to prefer to lean on England and France was particularly in the present crisis. Your Government approached mine about the Bosnian question only after a programme for an intended Conference had been drawn up and agreed to in Paris and London. This programme was published in the French Press *before* beeing communicated to us. French Papers as well as English and Russian rising a jubilant chorus about this achievement of the new "Triple entente" as matters stood when Iswolsky came to Berlin, my Government had no alternative but the striktest reserve with regard to several important points forming part of the Russian wishes. We could not urge our ally to consent to a programme, which we knew she would not accept, quite apart from the consideration that the programme had been drawn up without us; our cooperation having been dispensed with in a manner that was judged by the outer world as an intended demonstration. Had another course been adopted we would have been able to suggest to your Government *not* to launch this programme. We would have suggested preliminary confidential negotiations between the cabinets, such negotiations affording us more than opportunity of rendering valuable services to Russia. Had Russia

consulted us in the right time, matters would not be in the awful muddle they are in now nor in such a critical state. Under the present circumstances I dont quite see, what I could do, except giving words of moderation to both sides, which I allready have done. I also feel it my duty to tell you quite frankly that I am under the impression that your views about Austria's intentions are too pessimistic and that you are over anxious, more than is necessary. We here at any rate have not the slightest doubt that Austria is not going to *attack* Servia. This would not at all be like the Emperor Francis Josef, who is wise and judicious and such a venerable Gentleman. Nor do we believe that Aehrenthal harbours any such plans. Of course the small Balkan states must necessarily be prudent and loyal and avoid all provocations and put a stop to warlike preparations. These small states are an awful nuisance. Quantitées negligeables! The slightest encouragement from any quarter makes them frantic. The speeches that were made in the Skuptschtina on the 2d made a very bad impression upon me on account of their revolutionary tendency. Six years ago these very small people were looked upon with disgust and horror by the whole world as the murderers of their King!

I do hope with all my heart that notwithstanding numerous and serious difficulties have to be surmonted a peaceful solution will be arrived at; anything I can do in that direction will certainly be done. Take my word for it!

Hintze will be the bearer of this letter and will I hope find you all in health and happiness, to whom I once more wish that the Lord may give you Peace and prosperity and happiness in the New Year.

Victoria and I send best love to Alix; so glad my Xmas presents were a success. Believe me dearest Nicky, ever

Your
true and devoted cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. Austria's annexation of these two Balkan provinces on October 5th, 1908, caused an international crisis. In Russia it was considered a blow at Russia's prestige in the Balkans, delivered with the connivance of Germany. This the Kaiser denies here. Austria's act nearly precipitated in 1908 the war which broke out six years later. The incident also gave powerful impetus to the Russo-English rapprochement.
2. King Edward had visited the Czar in Reval on June 9-10, 1908, and there the foundation was laid for the Triple Entente.

LXI

Neues Palais 3/iv 09

Dearest Nicky

Will you kindly accept for yourself and dear Alix an Easteregg from us as a token of undiminished love and friendship. The one with the Greek portico and fountain represents a part of Charlottenhof, which was copied in the gardens of Peterhof and is for Alix. The round temple in the "Freundschafts-tempel" built by Fred. the Great in the park of Sans-souci and dedicated to all great historical pairs of men who kept their friendship unswervingly down to death, or who died for it. This may serve you as a symbol for our relation to each other as I look upon it. Easter is now nearing and I want to once more thank you sincerely for the loyal and noble way in which you kindly led the way to help to preserve peace. It is thanks to your highminded and unselfish intiative that Europe has been spared the horrors of a universal war, and that the Holy Week will remain unsullied by human blood, which would have been spilt. You may celebrate your Easter with the elating knowledge that everywhere in Europe thausands of families are on their knees thanking the Lord for Peace and praying for his blessing on your head. I intend to leave for Corfu

after Easter passing through Venice on our way down. How I wish I could show you this lovely spot, a little Paradise on Earth! No tourists and easily reached from the sea direct! A happy Easter and best wishes to Alix and the boy.—

Ever your devoted friend

Willy

P.S. On my home voyage I shall probably visit Uncle Arthur at Malta.

LXII

CORFU 8/v 09

Dearest Nicky

As Hintze is returning for your birthday I gladly seize the opportunity to send you these lines. With all my heart I wish you many happy returns. May Heaven bless and protect you and your wife and children. May you be successful in your work for your country and the welfare of your people.

A few weeks ago when affairs threatened to become dangerous[1] your wise and courageous descision secured peace for all the nations. I was most gratified that through my helping cooperation you were able to fullfill your task.

I very naturally expected that you and I would win universal applause, and I venture to think that we may have earned the gratitude of all well meaning people. But to my regret and astonishment a great many blame us both instead. Especially the Press in general has behaved in the basest way against me. By some papers I am credited with beeing the Author of annexation and am accused among other rot and nonsense of having humiliated Russia by my Peace proposal! Of course you know

better. Yet the fact must be taken note of that the papers mostly create public opinion. Some of them err through their ignorance and lack of correct information; they scarcely see further than their own noses length. But more dangerous and at the same time more loathesome is the part of the press which writes what it is paid for. The scoundrels who do such dirty work, are in no fear of starving. They will allways continue to incite the hostility of one nation against the other, and when at last, through their hellish devices, they have brought about the much desired collision, they placidly sit down and watch the fight which they organized, well assured that the profit will be theirs no matter what the issue may be. In this way in 99 cases out of a hundred what is vulgarly called "public opinion" is a mere forgery.

As Sovereigns who are responsible to God for the wellfare of the Nations entrusted to our care it is our duty therefore to closely study the genesis and development of "public opinion" before we allow it to influence our actions. Should we find that it takes its origin from the tarnished and gutterlike sources of the above named infamous press our duty will and must oblige us to energetically correct it and resist it.

Personally I am totally indifferent to newspaper gossip, but I cannot refrain from a certain feeling of anxiety, that if not contradicted at once, the foul and filthy lies which are freely circulated about my

policy and my country, will tend to create bitterness between our two people by virtue of their constant uncontradicted repetition. Public opinion wants clear information and leading.

When I set out for Corfu I was looking forward to a quiet holiday. But alas it was no to be! Another revolution[2] broke out at Constantinople! We poor rulers it seems are not entitled to holidays like other simple mortals. The troubles in the East made me very anxious for the time and still do so. The east is a regular nightmare a "boîte à surprises".[3] I would be most grateful if you could kindly write to me what your opinion is about the general outlook in Turkey. An exchange of our views is urgent and necessary lest fresh events should again take us by surprise.

The events of the last half year are a vivid proof of the absolute necessity of doing so; as they clearly show that it would have been most profitable if we had immediately communicated with each other at the outbreak of the crisis.

"If you and I join in loyal and open cooperation for the maintenance of Peace—which is my most fervent wish—I am thoroughly convinced that Peace will not only be maintained but not even be troubled. There is not a shadow of doubt that Peace guarantees the vital interests, the security and wellfare of our People as well as of our dyansties.

Will you kindly accept as birthday present a water-colour sketch made by a clever Corfiote painter

representing the "Achilleon"[4] seen from the olive-grove at the foot of the hill. We spent a lovely time there under a blue sky, surrounded by sweet scents and the marvellous display of any amount of flowers spending the whole day nearly out of doors, sitting on the marble terraces in the shade of fine palmtrees. I hope that once I may be able to show you this Paradise when you chance to be yachting in the Mediterranean. We made many charming excursions par Auto with tea picnics in the country, quite delightful. The island is quite lovely and the people quiet, simple and very polite, and no tourists! To-day we leave with a heavy heart on our return journey to Malta, Brindisi, Pola.[5] We saw much of the King and Queen[6] and I had the great pleasure of seeing my sister[7] very often.

Now goodbye dearest Nicky, best love to Alix and the children, especially the boy, God bless and protect you, au revoir I hope and believe me

Ever
Your most aff-ate and devoted friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. The affairs which had threatened to become dangerous were connected with Bulgaria's outstanding compensation to Turkey, the negotiations over which were impeded by friction between Constantinople and Sofia on associate questions. Mobilisation and movements of troops by both Powers caused Europe

to be apprehensive of fresh conflict, but trouble was averted by an offer from Russia for the capitalisation of the Russian indemnity for the war of 1876. The solution thus affected was ratified on April 19th, three weeks before the present letter. At the same time Bulgaria's independence, proclaimed by Turkey the previous year, was formally recognized by all the signatories to the Berlin Treaty.

2. The Kaiser had not reached Corfu when, on April 13th, the revolution broke out in Constantinople which led to the resignation of Hilmi Pasha, and the appointment of Tewfik Pasha in his place, as Grand Vizier, the brief overthrow of the Committee of Union and Progress and ultimately its return and the deposition of Abdul-Hamid on April 27th.
3. A box of surprises.
4. The Kaiser's palace in Corfu.
5. The Kaiser and Kaiserin visited Malta on the 10th, where they were received by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught; Brindisi on the 12th, where they met the King and Queen of Italy; and Pola on the 13th. From there they went to Vienna, where the Kaiser's visit was one of great ceremony.
6. The King and Queen of Greece.
7. The wife of Constantine, then Crown Prince of Greece.

LXIII

Neues Palais 20/x 09

Dearest Nicky

As Tatischeff leaves Berlin to accompany you during your journey[1] through our country I send you a short line by way of a salute. May your journey be pleasant and your stay in Italy agreeable and favoured by weather as we are here. Our Manoeuvres[2] went off very well and were most successful as he will have reported to you. Discipline and marching powers of the Infantry very exceptional and brilliant. The country was interesting but most difficult beeing very hilly and partly wooded. The field kitchens copied from your models have proved most practical and were freely used. A very stirring moment for the spectators at the last day of the manoeuvres was the appareance of the Zeppelin[3] airship accompanied by the military airship, which manouevered around it. My hunting stay in Rominten was favoured by such an exceptionally fine summer weather as we have not enjoyed for a long time. I killed 21 stags among them 6 of first class. The St. Johns Hospital which I built in the small frontier-town of Kittkehmen (opposite Wyschty-

nez) has answered very well, and during my inspection I saw several Russian patients we were able to care for. I am glad to hear that on account of the newly endowed Röntgen-Ray Cabinet, which I dedicated to the Hospital they have a good number of Russian patients, who come there to be "Durchleuchted"[4] and we have done lots of good. You kindly sent a sum through Stremaukoff[5] the Governor of Suwalki, who kindly came and inspected the Hospitals for which I beg you to accept my warmest thanks. He followed my invitation to Rominten, and dined with us; he is a very nice, quiet and agreeable man, and keeps "Gute Nachbarshaft"[6] with his Russian Collegues over the frontier, who are en rapport with him. I thought you would be pleased to know what a capable and good "representant" you have on this part of your frontier, which I regularly visit, as he is universally respected by my people. 2 days ago my daughter[7] was confirmed in the Friedenskirche, and she pleased everybody by the brave way she passed the ordeal of reading her "Confession" out to the community all people were deeply moved and I was very proud of her. For she showed a depth of feeling, and a seriousness in dealing with the problem of Life and Religion, which deeply impressed the assembled clergy; the more so as she wrote it quite alone, forbidding anyone to help her. The splendid summer still continues all the roses are out and the flowerbeds full

of colour like in August! The enclosed card corresponds exactly to the light of this evening.

With best wishes believe me dearest Nicky ever your most devoted

cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. The reference is to the visit of the Czar later in the month to Italy, when he was received by King Victor Emmanuel at Racconigi. A secret treaty, it was later disclosed, was concluded there between Russia and Italy.
2. At Morgentheim, in Würtemberg, from September 13 to 17. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the Earl of Lonsdale, Mr. Winston Churchill, and General Sir Bruce Hamilton were among those attending them.
3. The airship referred to was the "Zeppelin III." which set out on the morning of the 17th from Frankfort for Morgentheim, a distance of about 200 miles.
4. Ex-rayed.
5. Peter P. Stremoukhov, Councillor of State, and Governor of Suwalki.
6. Good neighbors.
7. Princess Victoria Louise, born 1892, who in 1913 married the Duke of Brunswick.

LXIV

BERLIN 11/1 10.

Dearest Nicky

So many thanks for your very kind letter with the photos Henry brought me, which pleased me much. What an excellent idea of yours making a two hours march in a private's kit and finding out for yourself what it means to carry such a load in the field! I am very glad to hear that you were satisfied with the appearance and behaviour of my deputation for poor Uncle Micha's[1] funeral. Thank you so much for the kind reception you gave them. They were very grateful for the permission to do duty on guard near his bier.

Henry faithfully repeated all the messages you intrusted him with for me. I entirely share your views. I can perfectly understand that developments in the Far East[2] are absorbing your attention.

The communication made to him about your decisions to withdraw 4 Army Corps from our frontier has given me great satisfaction. The more so as Henry told me, that in informing him of your decision you referred in the heartiest terms to the tra-

ditional friendship of our 2 countries and their brotherhood in arms established a century ago. You well know how I allways had and will have these sacred relations at heart and I need not tell you how deeply gratified I am at your kind and touching words.

I hope this letter will reach you on New Years day and I seize this opporunity of renewing to you and Alix the best wishes for the happy New Year for all of you God grant.

I hope to again hear from you as soon as you will be able to finally fix the date for our meeting in German waters. Henry suggested that he thought beginning of August on your and my return from Norway would suit you best? What a pleasure, the idea of seeing you dearest Nicky again! Best love to Alix and the children, the boy in particular, and believe me

Ever
Your true and devoted friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. Grand Duke Michael Nicholaievitch, the Czar's great-uncle.
2. There were numerous international complications at this time arising out of railways administration and construction in Manchuria and elsewhere in the Far East.

LXV

Neues Palais [1]

Dearest Nicky

Allow to me to lay before you confidentially a matter of importance to me.

It is the question of wether you would perhaps care to see a change in the person of the Aide-de-Camp, who has the honour of beeing attached to your person from here. As at our former meetings you allways spoke very highly of your appreciation of Capt. v. Hintze's qualities, and that he fully enjoyed your confidence, I do not desire to take any steps before having heard from you, or to act without your approval.

Please let me know quite unrestrainedly and frankly what you think about this matter. Should you think it desirable for me to replace Hintze, I would first communicate with you about the choice of his successor.

Your wishes in this respect are of the highest importance to me, as I consider it an absolute necessity, that the officer, who is attached by me to your person should command your fullest confidence.

I am glad to hear from the Chancellor that he is

having a satisfactory exchange of views on different questions with Sassonoff,[2] which may be settled to mutual satisfaction.

We are still thinking of the kind visit you paid us here and hope that the homeward journey did not fatigue Alix too much. Best love to her and the children from your

devoted cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. This letter was written at the end of November or the beginning of December, 1910.
2. During the visit of the Czar and Czarina in Potsdam on November 4th, 1910, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonoff, discussed at length with the German Chancellor a number of international questions, including that of the Bagdhad Railway, which also formed the subject of subsequent discussions.

LXVI

Neues Palais 24/xii 1910

Dearest Nicky

I am most grateful for your frank answer concerning Hintze.[1] I learn with deep regret from your letter that he no longer enjoys your confidence, I have therefore decided to recall him.

As his successor I would propose sending Major Gen: à la suite von Lauenstein at present in command of a Brigade of Infantry in Hanover. He was my personal aide-de-camp before taking over his command. You will probably remember him from the time he was mili. attaché to St. Petersburg; he also had the honour of accompanying your army to the war, and as I hear he was most popular with your officers. He is a most capable soldier and altogether most reliable and trustworthy. He writes a splendid german style, and were consequently member of 3 committees who sat on the Reform of the Regelements of our Infrantry, Artillery and Cavalry, all three having emanated from his pen.

I place unlimited confidence in him and in the hopes of your approval to my proposal look forward to your answer.

I had Osten-Sacken[2] for lunch the other day. His health seems perfect and he was in high spirits. I am so glad you made him a knight of St. Andrews and I very much appreciate your most friendly and sympathetic allusion to the relations of our two countries in the letter which you addressed to the dear old gentleman on this occasion.

I got some charming cards from Alix with the children as a group please thank her from me for them. I send you a "couteau de chasse" and to Alix a "saladiere" for the zakouska table, made in my Majolikafactory,[3] and mounted in silver in Dresden.

With the best wishes for a happy prosperous New Year, which may be one of Peace, and much love to Alix and the children I remain

Ever your devoted friend and cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. This Captain von Hintze afterwards became the well-known Admiral. After the fall of Kühlmann, he became German Secretary for Foreign Affairs.
2. Russian ambassador at Berlin.
3. The Royal factory at Meissen, a few miles west of Dresden, until 1863 in the fortress of Albrechtsburg, and thereafter nearer the city.

LXVII

Corfu 21/iv 1911

Dearest Nicky

As your Easter is approaching I beg to be allowed to send you my warmest Easterwishes through these lines. It is a time in which one allways passes in review ones acts and thoughts, before one goes to the Communion, and at this and after it one goes back into ones life with fresh resolutions and reaffirmed convictions. To these latter ones I rekon our relations to each other and our firm friendship for one another which were so happily confirmed at Wolfsgarten[1] and at Potsdam. You may allways count on me and my faithful interest in you and your family and your country.

We had a lovely time here amid flowers, scent, blue sky and sun. Only in the week before last it was cold and rainy. We were greatly surprised and interested in the quite unexpected discovery, by a chance experimental digging, of quite enormous sculptures belonging as it seems to an antique Temple[2] which dates as far back as the 6th or 7th century b.Chr. I spent several days basking in the

sun and looking at the appearance of the different objects, which was very exciting and would have amused you immensely.

I send you enclosed some photos from our house and garden, with the statue of Achilles I caused to be placed on the Terrace. Besides I enclose an article recently published in the German Press, written by an intimate friend of Uncle Bertie, an English Politician; with the intention to persuade the Germans to think better of Uncles policy than they do now. His name is not known. As you will see for yourself, it is very striking the greatest anxiety which governed Uncle for the future of England, was the possibility of the closer friendship between the 3 Empires (Germany, Russia, Austria), which he regarded as dangerous for England, and which he consequently tried to inhibit by all means in his power. That is the explanation for the phrase perpetually used by the English Press "Balance of Powers in Europe" i.e. keep the 3 Emperors apart, or we are lost, for they would assemble the whole European Continent around them and that is against English interests.—I go to London for Grandmamas unveiling,[3] at Georgy's invitation I hope to find out more about this—

With best love to Alix and all I remain

Ever your most devoted cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. On November 11th, 1910, the Kaiser paid a visit to Schloss Wolfsgarten, near Darmstadt, where the Russian Emperor was living.
2. In the course of the excavations in the village of Garitza or Kastrades, in Corfu, the buried ruins of one of the Corcyrean temples, probably dating from the beginning of the 6th Century B. C., were brought to light. On April 12th, 1911, a few days before this letter was written, sculptures were discovered representing the battles between Zeus and the Giants. The Kaiser all day watched the operations under a blazing sun and without interval for food.
3. The Kaiser was present at the unveiling of Queen Victoria's statue in the Mall on May 16th following. His visit lasted until the 21st.

LXVIII

Wilhelmshohe 8/viii 1911

Dearest Nicky

I am sorry that I am again compelled to approach you with a request relating to Gen. von Lauenstein, who has the honour of being attached to your august person. When I chose him for his post—with your approval—he immediately drew my attention to the fact that his wife was of very delicate health. I know her personally and am aware of the fact. Yet I prevailed upon him to go to his post, as you had written so very kindly about him.

She now has just had her 3rd baby, which has so much affected her health, that the doctors have all agreed, that it is quite out of the question, that she should stand the climate of St. Petersburg. Accordingly Lauenstein has now again remarked his request to be relieved of his post. I have regretfully consented seeing that it is impossible to exact from him to lead a life permantly detached from his family.

I feel assured that you will approve of my decision taken under such serious considerations.

I propose to send as his successor Lieut. Gen. of

my suite Count Dohna-Schlobitten, now in command of the Guards Cavalry Division. I daresay you remember my presenting him to you during your last visit to Potsdam—which left wish us such pleasant recollections. He was then about to join my son for his trip to India and would have been on his staff during his stay at Zarskoje if the original itinerary of the journey had been carried out.

Dohna is alltogether a genuine cavalry man—Frontsoldat—a first rate horseman, passionate rider and sportsman and allround man of the world. He has allways been popular with everybody in his different employments: as Captain in the 1st Dragoon guards, later as Colonel of my Hussars of the Guard then as Brigadier, and then as Leader of the Guards Cavalry Division. Last not least he won every officers esteem and sympathy in India; so much so that the Commander in Chief of the Forces there has invited him to the Coronation Durbar, to which I granted him leave. He will I trust on his return be able to give you vivid descriptions of the unique festivities and their unrivalled oriental splendor. His wife is good looking most sociable, and an old friend of mine from long standing. She enjoys an excellent position in the Berlin Court Society.

Dohna has my entire confidence, and I trust my choice will meet with your approval. We are deeply distressed by poor Knesebecks[1] sudden and untimely death. He was private secretary to my Grandmother for 11 and to my wife for 21 years! A loyal

trusted and faithful friend and a thorough gentleman. With best love to Alix and the children (what is the Railway doing?) believe me dearest Nicky

Ever your devoted friend and cousin

Willy

NOTE

1. Herr Bothe von dem Kneesebeck, who died suddenly at Cassel two days before this, was Assistant Master of Ceremonies at the household of the Kaiserin.

LXIX

Neues Palais 12/1 1912

Dearest Nicky

This letter will be brought to you by Gen. count Dohna just returned from India. He was present at the Durbar and will be able to give you vivid descriptions of the splendid and gorgeous scenes he took part in. His wife, who is staying since a few months at Petersburg to arrange his home for returning husband, will I am sure and hope be as agreeable to you and your Court as he. She writes very happy letters about the kindness shown to her by the society. As he is only just out of the tropics and the change to your climat with 20° beeing very sudden, I crave your condescension to think of him when opendoor ceremonies in winter are on the programme. As he is very thin, beeing bald too I suggested a warm wig forthe "Blessing of the water"! You can decide which colour it is to have!

I once more send you my sincerest wishes for a happy New Year, joining in your hopes and prayers to Heaven that He may grant us a peaceful one; well knowing that our sentiments in this point are identical, for our 2 countries. I hope that Xmas

eve went off well and that no accidents happened with my gifts; especially I hope that the little "tummies" will be none the worse for their own cooking.

Is the electric Railway of last year still in good order? I was very sorry when I heard of the death of poor Gen. Stroukow,[1] he was an excellent man and an old and cherished acquaintance of mine and a loyal friend.

With my very best wishes also for Alix and the children, from whom I had through Olga such a nice telegram, I remain Ever

Your most aff-ate friend and cousin

Willy

NOTE

1. General Alexander P. Strukov, a well known Russian cavalry officer.

LXX

Rominten 3/x 1912

Dearest Nicky

May I venture to call your attention and also your interest to a plan which has allready occupied my mind since some years. During my stays at Rominten I have minutely studied the question of the development of the frontier country[1] on both sides in my vicinity. I have come to the conclusion that the districts on both sides of our frontier are promising and may expect a hopeful future. But they must be opened up and also, if possible, be brought into relation to each other. On the enclosed railway map, a line is marked in red, it is a new railway which is going to be built running around the great Rominter Heide, so as to rend the transport of wood easier than now. The line runs from Goldap, past Pablindsen to Szittkehmen where it strikes the branch line to Eydtkuhnen. The line will open up stone and gravel quarries and pits and will transport a large amount of wood out of the Rominten forest. Now I venture to submit to your attention the idea wether it would not be a practical thing for your Government to lay a line from Suwalki to Pablind-

zen and there join our line. This would develop commerce between the two districts in a fine way. Pablindzen is allready a point over which a very "lebhafter Verkehr" to and fro has developed and is promising much more, in case a line came there. This plan has been discussed with your authorities since a considerable lapse of time, and I especially had talked it over with Mr. de Stremaukow who was very much interested in it and thought it most necessary also in the interest of the Government of Suwalki. He promised me he would report to you in a favourable way about this scheme and prepare to take an active part in furthering it, when he was relieved from his post, and so there was an end to it. That is a great pity because the frontier people are most anxious for the development of this question and he was quite acquainted with all the details of the question on both sides of the frontier and in permanent "rapport" with my authorities here. All this has stopped now, as his successor has a yet taken no steps to communicate with his collegues accross the frontier, though he is in office since 2 years. Therefore the people from all sides begged me to lay the matter directly before you. This I have done. I beg your pardon for troubling you with such a miserable little frontier detail; but 24 years living among these people I have grown together with them and they have gained confidence in me. They are simple, quiet, laborious and as all frontier districts a little bit forgotten, and as it is a good

deal to help such poor fellows on, I try my luck with you. I had good sport—about 19 Stags—but beastly weather excepting 2 days. Today snow and hail. Best love to Alix and the children and Waidmannsheil for you from Ever your

most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTE

1. Some of the lines suggested by the Kaiser were eventually built. They had little strategic value, however, and only served the busy traffic which was here developing.

LXXI

BERLIN 3/1 13

Dearest Nicky

The messenger leaves today with my presents for you Alix and the children. I hope that they may please the august recipients. At the same time I send you my heartiest wishes for Xmas and a peaceful New Year. I earnestly hope and trust that 1913 may prove a peaceful one, as you telegraphed to me on New Years day. I think that on the whole the outlook is reassuring, and that the discussions in London,[1] which are progressing favourably, will continue to be held in a conciliatory and friendly spirit, in which direction the foreign Policy of your Government so ably cooperates with all the other Powers.

I thank you for your message Tatischeff transmitted to me, who will allready have returned my answer to you. I trust that also this matter may be brought to a satisfactory issue and the difficulties which have arisen overcome.

Your war minister Gen. Souchomlinow[2] paid me a visit on his return from Leipzig. He was most

agreeable and most interesting in his descriptions of his deeds during the campaign 1877.

Up to now we have had a warm snowless winter here, which allows us to indulge in nice long gallops on horseback, nearly every day, provided it does not pour with rain.

Goodbye dearest Nicky, my best love to Alix and the children especially to the boy, who I hope is getting better, and believe myself Ever

Your most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. The London Conference of Ambassadors had met on December 17th, but their discussions did not make the favorable progress here anticipated.
2. General Wladimir A. Sukhomlinov, who was dismissed as Minister of War and tried for corruption and mismanagement during the Great War.

LXXII

Berlin 3/II 13

Dearest Nicky

So many thanks for your kind wishes and the splendid gift you so kindly sent me. What a great surprise when I entered my birthday room! and saw the two grand pictures. It was really a charming idea of yours to send me those two beautiful originals which are of great artistical and historical value to us here, as they represent portraits of so many well known personality here. These pictures gave me a real great pleasure, and I beg you to accept my most hearty thanks once more.

I am so glad to see by your letter, that the dear boy[1] is making good progress, but sorry that the state of Alix's health is not satisfactory, I am sure the weeks she spent in tending the boy, must have been most trying; but confidently hope that rest and a cure or the Crimea will soon put her to right again.

I fervently hope with you that the Balkan troubles may soon be finally arranged without further complications, and am most anxious to cooperate with you for that purpose. Of course Austria as a near neighbour to those parts has interests to look after.

But I am under the impression that in doing so, she does not reclaim anything for herself, but only wishes to make sure that no readjustments of the map occur which might turn out a danger to her in future. Adalbert is again out of bed, and tomorrow Dona[2] will again take up her quarters together with me. Thank God all went off so well. Best love to Alix and the children and believe me

Ever
Your most devoted and aff-ate cousin
Willy

NOTES

1. The Czarevitch Alexei.
2. The Kaiserin.

LXXIII

BERLIN 18/III 1913

Dearest Nicky

May I inform you that we have now definitely fixed the date for the wedding of our dear Sissy[1] for the 24th of May.

The main object of my lines is to convey to you and Alix our most cordial invitation to the wedding ceremonies. We both would only be too delighted if you could give us the pleasure of your presence and I fervently hope that you will be able to leave Russia for a few days to meet many of your relatives; as we have asked your dear Mama, Aunt Alix, Georgie and May, Waldemar[2] etc. to enable all the "Geschwister" to meet each other as well as Aunt Thyra.[3]

I am so glad all your festivities[4] went off so well and successfully, and that your boy could be present, and that he is progressing satisfactorily, and will soon I hope have quite recovered. After Easter the Cumberlands[5] are coming for a visit and then we go to Hamburg for a month, as the damned Balkan muddle has deprived me of the possibility of beeing at my heavenly paradise Corfu!

With best love from Victoria and me to Alix and all the children believe me Ever your most devoted cousin and friend

Willy

NOTES

1. Princess Victoria Louise, who on May 24 married the Duke of Brunswick.
2. The Dowager Empress, Maria Feodorovna, was not present at the wedding. King George and Queen Mary, but not Queen Alexandra (Aunt Alix), accepted the invitations here referred to. Waldemar was the Grand Duke Vladimir.
3. Aunt Thyra—mother of the Duke of Brunswick.
4. From the 6th to the 9th of March the 300th anniversary of the Romanoffs' accession to the throne was celebrated throughout Russia.
5. The Brunswick family.

LXXIV

BERLIN 30/1 14.

Dearest Nicky

Many thanks to you dear Alix and the children for your kind wishes and the lovely china pot which accompanied them. Thank God I could spend my birthday in happiness especially owing to the presence of dear Sophy and Georgy who had come all the way from Athen to spend the day with me. I am most gratified that you still keep pleasant recollections of the visit you paid us last summer on the occasion of Sissy's wedding, and you may be assured that we all most heartily reciprocate your kind feelings and remembrance.

I am so glad to hear that you all have benefited so much by your nice stay in the Crimea, and that especially Alix and the boy are so much better for their visit to the sunny South.

Remember the interest, which you took a few years ago, when you visited Homburg, and saw the cathedral I built there, I venture to present you with a book, which I have caused to be published about the Chapel in the New Castle of Posen.[1] It is in the old Byzantine Style, took 7 years work and was con-

secrated in our presence last August. It is copied from Motives partly from Ravenna (Theodoric the Great's tomb) partly from Mon Reale and the Capella Palatina in Palermo.

The mission of Bieloselsky who brought the cravat for Alix's Dragoons was a very kind thought and most appreciated by the Regiment; he is to lunch with me on Sunday. With best love to Alix and the dear children believe me, dearest Nicky Ever

your devoted cousin and friend

Willy

NOTE

1. The Schloss, a Romanesque structure of granite and sandstone, was erected in 1905-1910. In the high tower is a chapel, decorated with mosaics. But there is nothing Byzantine about Theodoric the Great's tomb in Ravenna.

LXXV

Berlin 26/III 14.

Dearest Nicky

General Count Dohna, who has the honour of beeing attached to your person, has intimated to me his intention of leaving the service in the month of May. By the death of his father he has inherited a very large and extensive property as well as a very fine castle of Finkenstein;[1] a 100 years ago the Headquarter of Napoleon I before the battle of Eylau. He is absolutely necessary for the personal administration of it and so to my great regret I must accede to his wish. As remplacant for him I intend to send you, with your kind approval, his Excellency Gen. Lieut. v. Chelius.[2] He was my Regimental adjutant when I commanded the Leib Garde Husars, spent several years in Rome as militaire attaché, commanded my old Hussar Regiment as Colonel with great distinction, and was on my personal service since then. He is quite phenomenal as musician, and plays piano as well as Rubinstein, d'Albert or any other great artist. He is very agreeable and quite discret and absolutely reliable; he is to accompany me to Corfu next month. He speaks fluently

German, English, Italian and Ancient Greek, and is one of my most intimate personal friends I have.
With best love to Alix and the children Ever your

most aff-ate cousin and friend
Willy

NOTES

1. The Castle of Finkelstein, in East Prussia, is about 20 miles east of the Vistula and 50 southwest from Preuss-Eylau where Napoleon fought and defeated the Russians and Prussians under General Bennigsen on February 8, 1807.
2. The last personal attaché of the Kaiser's to the Czar's Court.

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